



## **END OF YEAR REPORT – FY'14 (JULY 2013- JUNE 2014)**

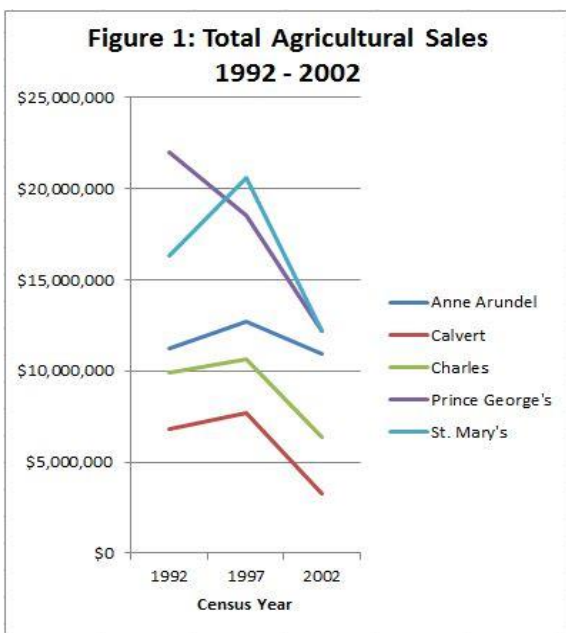
### **Introduction**

This is a special annual report for two reasons. First, SMADC issued its last “buyout” checks during the year. Second, the 2012 U.S. Census of Agriculture gives us the chance to see if SMADC’s efforts over the last 14 years have been successful.

### **Back to the Beginning**

Maryland was one of 46 states to win the “Master Settlement Agreement” with the major tobacco companies in 1998. At issue was the cost of health care borne by the states due to smoking. In Maryland, a Cigarette Restitution Fund was established to “implement strategies to reduce the burden of tobacco related disease . . . with a specific emphasis on tobacco use prevention and cessation and cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment.”

Governor Glendenning also wished to end tobacco production in Maryland. He proposed a “tobacco buyout” program to be funded by up to 5% of the state’s share of the 25-year settlement agreement to support Southern Maryland’s Regional Strategy for Agriculture. Thus, in Southern Maryland, we became the guinea pigs for a big experiment to replace a region’s #1 crop with other kinds of farm production. Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) was formed to “administer the Buyout and to create a new infrastructure to support viable kinds of farming in the region.” The 17-member Commission consisted of a broad cross-section of the community including farmers, elected officials, and representatives from local government, business, and finance.



It is difficult to describe the mood associated with the loss of tobacco to the farming community. In Southern Maryland, the size of farms, the type of barns and even social interactions and the formation of communities had been heavily influenced by tobacco production. By 1998, most acknowledged that tobacco was harmful to human health. However, tobacco farmers had always been proud of their ability to bring a good crop to market, the same as generations before them. Most tobacco farmers reluctantly supported the buyout, but the future of farming was in peril. Many older farmers could not see themselves trying something new and others had a steep learning curve. The opportunity to sign up for the Tobacco Buyout began in 2001 and ended in 2005.

Tobacco was always the “money crop” in Southern Maryland. Farmers raised other products but most relied on tobacco to remain in business. By 2002, 63% had taken the buyout. Ultimately, 83% of all tobacco farmers (producing 92% of total lbs.) signed up. Between 1997 and 2002, the national USDA agricultural census reported a 38% drop in agricultural sales (Figure 1) in the five counties of

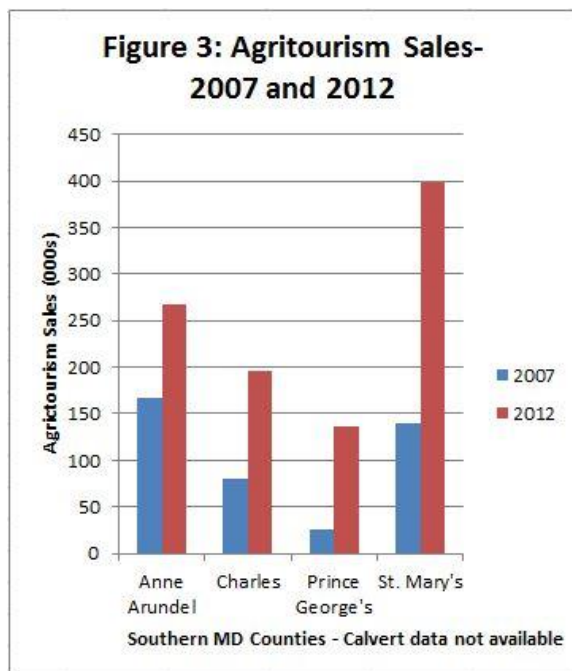
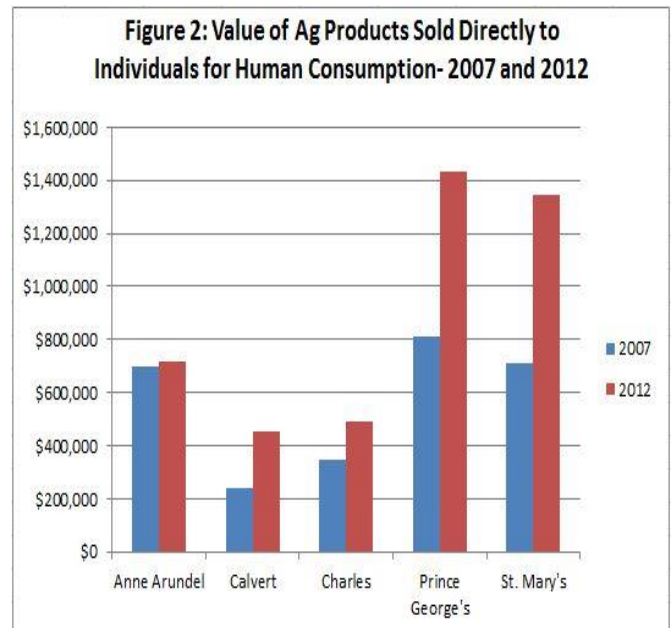
Southern Maryland.

Meanwhile, the Commission had adopted a mission “to explore diverse, market-driven agricultural enterprises, coupled with land preservation, to preserve our environmental resources and rural character while keeping the region’s

farms productive and vibrant.” Staff explored opportunities for new farm enterprises and held seminars, workshops and training programs to help farmers explore ways to diversify and market new products. It provided grants to foster farmers’ markets, and research funding and resources to build ag-related industries. It simplified and streamlined regulations as the need arose. As each new viable specialty emerged, SMADC supported it with research, public outreach and a new guide and/or promotional campaign.

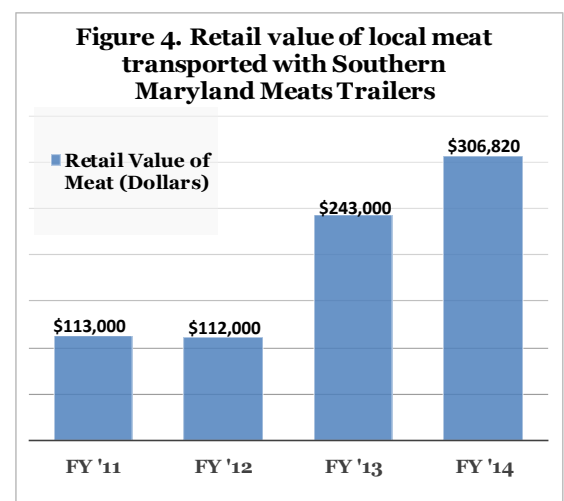
It takes time to learn how to grow new products, obtain resources and develop new markets, but progress has been made, as reflected in the national 2012 census<sup>1</sup>. Recognizing the huge consumer market and the potential of the local food movement, SMADC launched the So. Maryland, So Good and Maryland Buy Local Challenge programs, and existing farmers and new farmers began selling directly to consumers. The latest census data shows that from 2007 to 2012, the value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption grew 58% in Southern Maryland, versus 32% in the state. Direct sales grew by \$1.6 million in Southern Maryland, with growth in all five counties (Figure 2).

Agritourism also grew as SMADC developed the industry and launched its Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination program. A number of farmers in Southern Maryland experimented with agri-tourism, such as farm and winery tours, hay rides, and corn mazes. Between 2007 and



2012, agritourism sales grew 142% in Southern Maryland versus -1% for Maryland as a whole (Figure 3). Total agri-tourism sales grew by \$586,000 over the period for the four counties (this does not include the other economic benefits associated with agri-tourism such as overnight stays and dining).

SMADC’s initiative also helped create the Maryland state highway sign program for agri-tourism farms in FY’14. The first two farms with approved signs are in Charles County, with a third pending in Frederick County. Charles County government and SMADC initiated a series of discussions with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) to create a program that permits SHA to install signs directing the public to ag-tourism farms.



Other advances (see details in report that follows):

Since the launch of SMADC’s Southern Maryland Meats program in 2011, sales of local meat have grown to \$306,820, supporting 40 farmers in the five counties (Figure 4).

SMADC’s efforts to grow the wine industry in Southern Maryland have led to 68 new acres planted as vineyards, which when all the vines are mature can bring as much as \$206,400

just from the grapes alone. There are now 13 wineries in Southern Maryland, with more to come in the next few years, adding additional revenue in direct wine sales and tourism.

SMADC has also worked to streamline regulations as the need arises from the community. Working with state, county and federal agencies, SMADC has led the state in improving farmers' ability to process and sell value-added processed goods such as pickles, Amish cheese, wine at farmers' markets, and meat.

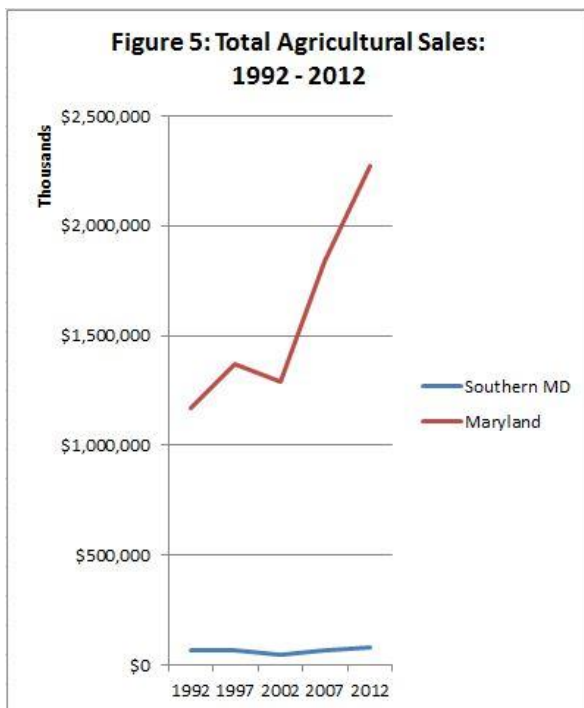
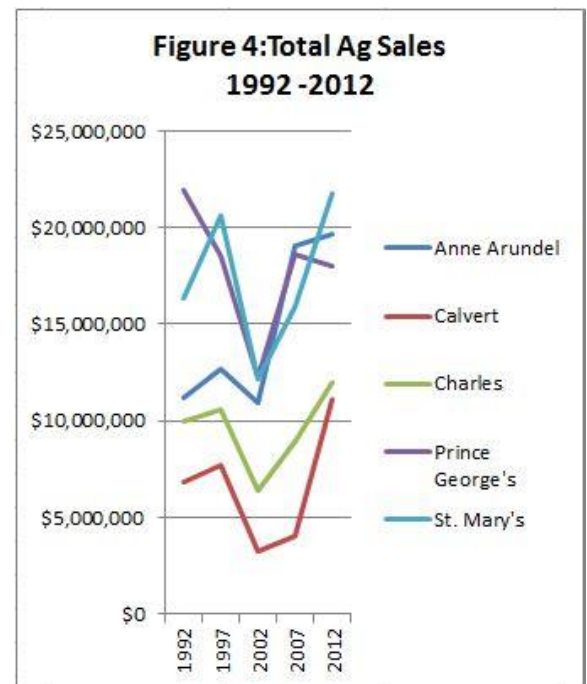
SMADC has recently teamed up with a local non-profit to create a win-win for farmers and the hunger community, by increasing access to fresh local produce that is edible but not sold on the wholesale or retail market.

Southern Maryland has been under intense development pressure. Over the 12 years of land preservation program funding, 275 farms containing 31,600 acres have been preserved in Southern Maryland using program funds and leveraging additional funds by the counties. These funds have allowed counties to prioritize Tobacco Buyout farms.

### Has Southern Maryland Agriculture Rebounded?

#### Yes and No

The good news is that Southern Maryland has rebounded to pre-tobacco buyout numbers as a result of innovation, diversification, and support from the counties and the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (see Figure 4: Total Ag Sales). However, total Maryland agriculture sales almost doubled over the same period that Southern Maryland was just trying to recover. In 1997, total Southern Maryland agriculture sales represented 5.6% of total Maryland agriculture sales (Figure 5). As of 2012, total Southern Maryland sales were 3.6% of total Maryland agriculture sales. Southern Maryland has some catching up to do with the rest of the state to fully recover from the big experiment to end tobacco production. The work is not done to fully rebuild Southern Maryland's agricultural industry to the level of the rest of the state.



#### What is Next?

Southern Maryland is geographically well-situated to the large Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan region. Its farmers can benefit more from the \$26 billion dollar food budget<sup>1</sup> of the consumers living in the region. Thus far, Southern Maryland farmers have been successful in reaching consumers via direct sales to consumers at roadside stands, farmers markets, CSAs, small grocery stores, etc. However, farms have not been as successful in marketing to institutions and major chains. Existing farmers attempting to sell through the wholesale markets find themselves bumped out by cheaper product grown long distances from our region.

The future for Southern Maryland agriculture depends on growing new farmers, continuing to develop new agricultural industries, and aggregating and selling food through a center such as a local food hub that enables producers to gain entry to new markets that they cannot access on their own.

<sup>1</sup> Based on U.S. Census Bureau's household data in 2010 and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's estimate of average household expenditures on food.

SMADC's regional and statewide programs strive to create economic opportunities for farmers through local and regional markets, improve processing and distribution infrastructure for local and regional agriculture, expand access to healthy fresh food for consumers, including underserved communities, and provide the research, resources and information that existing and new farm entrepreneurs need to be successful. As farms innovate to increase profit, SMADC increasingly works to streamline state and federal regulations that may be outdated or unnecessarily hamper business, and SMADC funds help assure there will be land for future farmers.

More specifically, SMADC is already working in partnership to aggregate and distribute surplus food to the hunger community in ways that also economically benefit the farmers (see Hub and Spoke), and is working to take this to the next level. SMADC is investigating means to facilitate "GAP" certification for growers (an audit verification program for food safety handling, increasingly being required by retailers, wholesalers and other buyers). SMADC works with partners to provide expensive farm equipment that can be shared by many farmers through its Farm Share program, and facilitates bulk-purchasing for needed vines, feed and other necessary items, thereby diminishing the high cost of production. SMADC continues to investigate value-added processing for farmers, such as flash freeze facilities, acidified foods, meats, wine, cheese, etc., and streamlines the regulatory process as needed. Finally, SMADC is developing partnerships to secure land for new farmer incubation.

SMADC regularly evaluates the success of its programs, and, based on these evaluations, will continue to maintain or revise its already established programs. SMADC has a proven track-record and is excited and well-poised to guide the future of food and agriculture in the region and throughout the state.

## **SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

### **What's New in FY'14 (Highlights and details follow):**

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) strategically invests in programs and initiatives to support economic growth and jobs, grow new farmers and related industries, and expand access and availability to healthy fresh food in an environmentally sound manner. SMADC's programs benefit farmers and consumers throughout Maryland, with a special emphasis on the five counties of Southern Maryland.

In FY'14, SMADC placed a special emphasis on improving access to fresh farm foods for the hunger community and working poor, farmers' markets, building the local meats and dairy industry, "growing new farmers", and enhancing public awareness.

Notable examples of these priorities in FY'14 are highlighted in the following pages:

#### **Building Healthy Communities**

Hub and Spoke Program

Food Maps

Farmers' Markets

Southern Maryland Food Council

Crop Hop

Cornelia and the Farm Band / Farm to School

#### **Giving Farmers Tools to be Prosperous**

Southern Maryland Meat Industry

Dairy Industry

Equine Industry

Wine Industry

Agritourism Industry: Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination

Maryland Buy Local Challenge

Farm Share Equipment



Cultivating New and Transitioning Farmers  
Maryland FarmLINK  
Maryland Mentor Match  
START: New Farmers  
Agricultural Land Preservation

Our established programs continued to benefit the region and Maryland as we finished, enhanced or maintained the following:

Maryland Tobacco Buyout  
So. Maryland, So Good  
SMILE (Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo)  
Community Outreach: Education to farmers and the public through SMADC websites, news announcements, social networking (Facebook, twitter, blog, Mail Chimp), public speaking, and events. Community outreach to also include feedback surveys (Hub and Spoke recipients, START farmers) and the Foodways event and community outreach with the small discussion groups.

[www.smadc.com](http://www.smadc.com)

## **FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

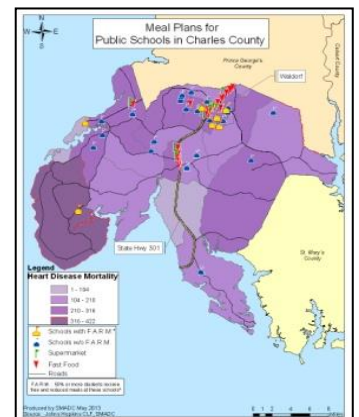
### **HUB AND SPOKE PROGRAM**

The Hub and Spoke Task Force formed in August 2013 to identify effective ways to improve distribution of fresh, locally grown produce to food-insecure families in Southern Maryland. Staffed by the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), the Task Force met with many members of the community, including public health officials, University of Maryland educators, food banks, farmers, churches, pantries, Department of Corrections, and School Superintendents to assess the needs of the community and develop a series of recommendations.

The Hub and Spoke Task Force proposed a three-year pilot program in which fresh, locally grown produce donations from farmers/gardeners are distributed to needy families in the five counties of Southern Maryland. Edible produce may be brought to a central site (Hub) which then distributes the food to the hunger community through mobile food drops at targeted sites (Spokes) in the community such as churches, schools or pantries. Alternatively, farms can directly donate to Certified Spokes. Certified Spokes can be any site that meets the criteria of being able to receive and distribute produce in a timely manner and issue valid receipts to the farmers.

#### **Tax Credit Incentive**

A key component of the Hub and Spoke model is an economic incentive for farmers to donate food that would reimburse them some of the cost of the harvest, packaging, and delivery. The Task Force recommended a state tax credit of 50% of wholesale value for eligible farm donations from conventional farms and a 75% tax credit for certified organic products. The Bill was introduced to the Maryland legislature but did not make it through in 2014; it will be reintroduced in 2015.



#### **Food Maps**

In the course of SMADC's research, it became obvious that communities in need must be identified differently in rural areas versus urban areas. Maps created by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) did not validate what is truly seen on the ground. SMADC recommended new ways of identifying areas of need and food deserts based on school data, and developed maps showing public transportation lines, schools, food distribution sites, and grocery stores. SMADC worked with the Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future to create additional food maps for the five counties of Southern Maryland. The maps feature farms, farmers' markets, food production, distribution,

food deserts, food pantries, and where recipients can apply for and use federal benefits, etc. The Southern Maryland maps include:

- Farms, farmers' markets and farm stands
- Food deserts
- Overlapping layers that display income, population, and health statistics
- Schools that provide free and reduced meals to children
- Areas of concern with regards to health, income and proximity to healthy foods
- Locations of food distribution for the hunger community
- Local transportation lines
- Grocery stores and local convenience stores (and which carry fresh local food)

A report was issued in December 2013 and is available at [http://www.smadc.com/food\\_farms\\_nutr/hubspeke.html](http://www.smadc.com/food_farms_nutr/hubspeke.html).

#### Members of the Task Force:

Bernie Fowler Jr., Farming 4 Hunger

Secretary Earl F. Hance, Maryland Department of Agriculture

Delegate Sally Jameson, Charles County

Reginald Kearny, Southern Maryland Ministers Alliance

Jerome Klasmeier, Assistant Comptroller for Maryland

Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton, Charles County

Christine L. Bergmark, Task Force Chair, and Executive Director, SMADC

Staff: Mindy Waite, SMADC Special Programs Manager

#### 2014: The Hub

In spite of the tax bill set-back, the program took steps to begin the Hub and Spoke program. Farming 4 Hunger (F4H), a non-profit run by Bernie Fowler Jr., served as the central Hub in Charles County. In partnership with the Food Banks and churches, Farming 4 Hunger had been growing and distributing potatoes, green beans and corn to the hunger community since 2012. In 2013, F4H grew and delivered 1.6 million pounds of fresh produce to the hunger community, and helped the Food Banks distribute additional food throughout the region.

By forging a partnership with SMADC, F4H has been able to increase the quantity and variety of local produce distributed to needy families. SMADC connected F4H with local farmers who grow more perishable produce, such as tomatoes, melons, peppers, cucumbers, etc.

SMADC funds provided F4H a refrigerated truck in the summer of 2014. F4H was able to work with the Maryland Food Bank to purchase a refurbished truck at a reduced price. The truck has allowed F4H to pick up and aggregate a variety of produce, safely and efficiently from the farm community, which is then distributed throughout the region. The truck increased the turnaround time of fresh farm produce from field to the community. In past years, produce was shipped to Baltimore and returned for distribution to Southern Maryland which could take several weeks. Now with the SMADC/F4H truck, produce can be delivered to needy families within to 24-48 hours, reducing the mileage and trucking costs of shipped produce from across the state, and enhancing the quality and freshness of the food.

#### Economic benefit for local farms

Eleven local farms have teamed up with F4H, and by August of 2014, F4H has already trippled the fresh produce drops from those in 2013 (9 farms in St. Mary's county, 1 in Charles County, and 1 in Prince George's County). The partnerships have helped the farmers to make a small profit as F4H can provide between \$2.50-\$3.00 per bushel through an agreement with the Maryland Food Bank. Although the price may change with supply and demand, previously the farmers received only \$1.50 per bushel for donated food; now participating farmers receive a doubling of the economic benefit.

In Prince George's County, during the month of August 2014, the F4H/SMADC truck picked up and distributed over 71,000 pounds of produce from one farm alone, most of which, according to the farmer, would otherwise have gone to waste.

### Mobile Drops

From July 1 to August 29, 2014, F4H delivered fresh mobile produce drops to 37 locations in all five Southern Maryland counties, totaling over 206,000 pounds of fresh, local produce. An additional 38 fresh mobile produce drops are scheduled through October 2014. In addition to the mobile produce drops, four food pantries and four food banks pickup produce directly on the F4H farm. One elderly recipient was ecstatic, "I haven't had fresh watermelon since I was 13", he exclaimed.

### Certified Spokes

The Hub and Spoke program includes a component whereby farms can directly donate to Certified Spokes, ideally receiving a tax credit for their donations. Certified Spokes can be any site that meets the criteria to receive and distribute produce in a timely manner and issue valid receipts to the farmers. As a result of the Hub and Spoke program, a large produce farm in Charles county has donated several thousand pounds of fresh, organic produce to a food pantry in Charles county that serves up to 100 people in need a week. The partnership has gone so well that the pantry has not had to buy canned vegetables and fruits, thus providing its community fresher and tastier foods.

Four additional food pantries (two in Calvert, one Charles, and one in Prince George's County) have had a similar experience. By picking up farm fresh produce directly from the F4H on a recurring basis, these pantries are now able to offer more nutritious meal options to their clients. Additional pantries have asked to participate, and SMADC is researching how to put this part of the program in place for 2015, assuming the Maryland Tax Credit bill is passed by the Maryland legislature.

In order for Certified Spokes to receive donations directly from farmers and issue receipts for the tax credit, the Spokes must be trained in safe food handling, and be able to validate that the donated food is indeed edible. They must be able to weigh the produce and SMADC is investigating whether the Spokes will be required to use certified scales which could cost upwards of \$400 or a less expensive generic scale.

**Community Engagement and Education:** A major component of the success of F4H is the large number of community volunteers (both at the mobile drop sites and on the farm), the engagement of pre-release inmates who are trained with job skills on the farm, and education to school groups and the community.

### **Highlights in 2014 (July-August 2014)**

- Increased distributions of fresh food to 37 locations, in all five Southern Maryland counties between July and August 2014 (up from 10-15 in FY'13). This is a 33-40% increase in just the first two months.
- 11 farms donating produce for F4H (10 began in FY'14).
- Participating farmers saw a doubling of economic benefit (50% increase in income).
- Faster turnaround time of fresh farm produce, from field to the hands of the needy in 24-48 hours.
- Reduced mileage and trucking costs of shipped produce.
- Fresher, higher quality of food distributed.
- Increased direct farmer to food pantry relationships (Spokes).
- Community volunteers and school group visits to F4H.

### Next Steps

- Increase connections with local farms and the Hub and Spoke program.
- Engage with additional sites for new farmer incubation.
- Implement the tax credit bill.
- Further build the Southern Maryland food hub model.
- Begin sales to schools and hospitals.
- Increase education and outreach.

## FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### SOUTHERN MARYLAND FARMERS' MARKETS

Farmers' markets have gained popularity over recent years for a number of reasons: more informed consumers, interest in eating healthy, desire to support the local growers and the economy, and heightened awareness of the issues related to food safety and wanting to know where one's food comes from. They provide a source of income for direct-market farmers. Farmers' markets can also be a means to provide fresh food to the underserved communities, while also boosting income for farmers. SMADC has developed initiatives to address both.

SMADC assists farmers' markets in the five counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's) through education, promotion, advice for start-up, soliciting farmers, and acting as a conduit of information about regulations and other pertinent information.

#### Workshops, Marketing and Promotional Support

SMADC hosts an annual workshop for farmers' market managers to keep the markets up to date with new incentives, opportunities and regulations.

SMADC produces a yearly directory of farmers' markets throughout the five-county region.

SMADC provides promotional assistance grants directly to farmers' markets where the majority of farm vendors are from Southern MD. The grants range from \$500 - \$2,000 per market. Since 2003, over \$203,900 has been awarded to eligible farmers' markets for promotion. In 2013, gross revenue from these farmers markets was approximately \$2.6 million, from 353 Southern Maryland vendors. Over the years that SMADC has worked with markets, a cumulative estimate of \$20 million has been earned through the markets. This amounts to a \$38 million impact on the local economy, as farms and their employees reinvest their earnings in the community.

#### Data:

Year	Total Markets	Total Vendors	So. Md. Vendors	SMADC Mkt. Grant	Revenue	Market impact with multiplier*
2003	14	193	n/a	\$18,500	\$1,357,600	\$2,525,136.00
2004	14	179	n/a	\$17,000	\$1,600,000	\$2,976,000.00
2005	13	176	154	\$17,500	\$1,500,000	\$2,790,000.00
2006	13	191	138	\$19,500	\$1,701,000	\$3,163,860.00
2007	13	202	179	\$19,000	\$1,933,000	\$3,595,380.00
2008	14	226	190	\$19,500	\$2,725,000	\$5,068,500.00
2009	18	225	212	\$25,750	\$2,375,100	\$4,417,686.00
2010	18	263	222	\$19,500	\$2,495,750	\$4,642,095.00
2011	19	239	217	\$25,000	\$2,312,498	\$4,301,246.00
2012	16	291	252	\$22,450	\$2,667,252	\$4,961,089.00
2013	17	353	314	\$22,650	\$2,647,760	\$4,924,834.00
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$203,900</b>	<b>\$20,647,708</b>	<b>\$38,404,737.00</b>

*\*The multiplier adds the economic benefit of the market for its vendors by multiplying by the gross sales with the Regional Input-Output Modeling System II multiplier (or RIMS I\*\* multiplier) for the state. These figures represent how the revenue made from the market by the farmers/growers will be added back into the local economy. It captures the impact of an initial round of spending plus successive rounds of re-spending of the initial dollars within a region. Note: Data counts all vendors at each market, and does not account for the same farm vendor selling at different markets.*

#### Results

As shown in the table above, for a relatively small SMADC grant, overall return on investment of the farmers' markets has been significant. Market revenue and vendor participation has grown steadily and farmers are happy as they are



receiving more revenue by selling directly to consumers at the retail level. Many surrounding businesses and management companies view farmers' markets as an asset, and are soliciting more markets and actively supporting and promoting them. This has two ramifications, while the increase of markets may have an economic benefit in the surrounding communities, farmers complain that too many markets decrease sales at any one venue.

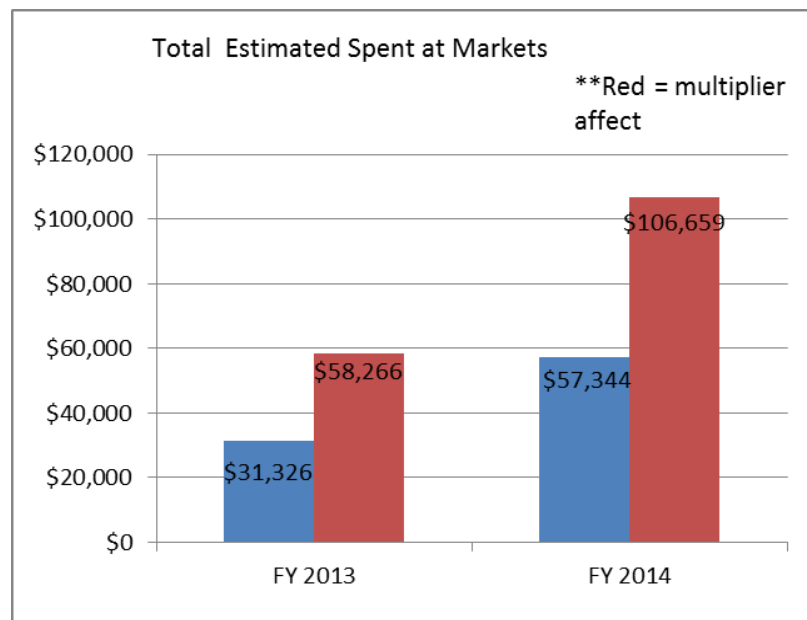
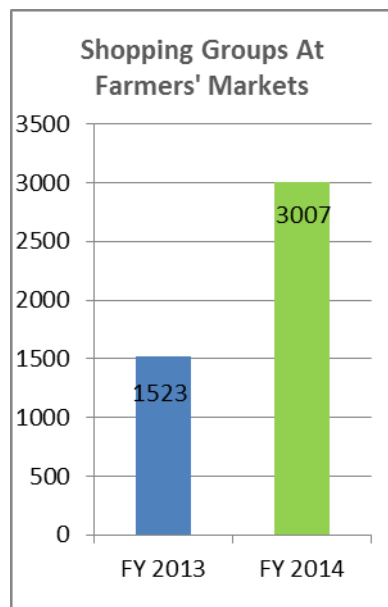
### Farmers' Market Economic Surveys

In order to fully appreciate the economic and social impact of Southern MD farmers' markets on the local economy, SMADC began conducting consumer surveys at markets in 2012. The number of shoppers is recorded, along with a customer survey. Analysis is enabling SMADC and the markets to better understand the impact of the market on the local communities. These surveys also help vendors, market managers and local community government to better understand their customers. Through the surveys, markets can also better understand the needs and wishes of their customers.



*Customers answering survey questions at Farmers' markets*

The original five markets have been continuously surveyed for the third year in a row (at approximately the same time each season). In FY'14, SMADC expanded the surveys to seven markets. Surveying over a number of years should average out abnormalities in any given year. Data and highlights are shared with the individual markets. The following graphs show data from the original five markets.



*Results are for a single market day on a specific date. Note: Shopping group is typically 1.6-2.0 people, SMADC used 1.8 as the average number. Counts take place hourly, 20 minutes after the hour. The estimated attendance is determined by multiplying the total of the hourly counts by 3. Shopping groups are determined by dividing the est. attendance by 1.8.*

Thus far, in 2014, the data for five markets surveyed shows following:

- 55% of all patrons of these markets primarily came out exclusively for the market (may depend on market location and proximity to other businesses).
- Patrons surveyed spent \$15 - \$28 at the markets on day of survey.
- An estimated \$4,100 - \$20,000 was spent at the markets on day of the survey.
- 145 vendors (farms, artists, food).

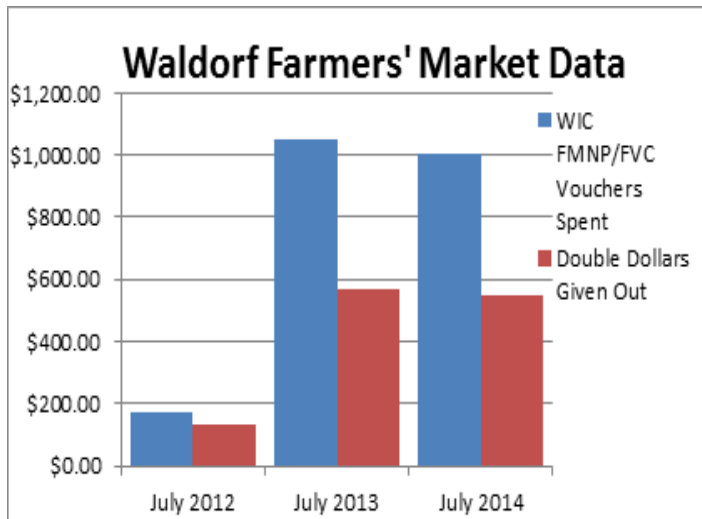
### Increasing Access to Fresh Food for the Hunger Community at Farmers' Markets

Several federal nutrition assistance programs have been established to help needy families attain better access to fresh farm food, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

(FMNP/WIC), and Fruit and Vegetable Check (FVC) program. The primary challenge to make farmers' markets accessible to low-income shoppers is the technology and administration required to accept SNAP benefits. In Maryland, all SNAP benefits are redeemed through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) machines. Debit and credit cards can also be swiped through the EBT machines which allow the market to earn income through transaction fees. SMADC assisted the first two markets obtain EBT machines (Home Grown Farm Market in Lexington Park and the Waldorf Farmers' Market). There are 12 markets in Southern Maryland that now accept EBT; eight have received marketing assistance from SMADC.

In 2014, SMADC was again awarded the Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) grant and is assisting the two participating farmers' markets by offering administration support, stipends

for onsite management of the EBT machine during market and funds for incentive dollars (also known as Bonus Bucks). Data on this initiative will be available after the market season ends in 2014.



These two markets incentivize all federal nutrition programs (SNAP, FMNP and FVC checks) by providing up to \$10 per transaction to purchase more fresh food (Bonus Bucks). The markets showed a combined total of \$821.00 EBT/SNAP sales (96 transactions) and distributed \$564 of SNAP incentives. In addition, the markets incentivized \$1,626 in WIC/FMNP checks.



#### Senior FMNP

This program provides low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at the market. The coupons are typically given out at senior centers. The challenge has been getting the seniors to make a trip to the farmers' market and redeem their coupons. For three years, Charles County has invited Waldorf farmers' market vendors to a senior farmers' market at the community centers where they distribute coupon books. SMADC staff attends these markets to give out incentive funds (Bonus Bucks) and distribute flyers. These opportunities provide outreach and education to seniors. The Senior FMNP checks distributed in July 2014 are not accounted for in this report, however both markets reported a significant pick-up of these checks during the month of July.

Partners include: Waldorf Farmers' Market, Charles County Department of Social Services, Charles County Department of Community Services, Home Grown Farm Market, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Eat Fresh Maryland, Rural Maryland Council, St. Mary's County Economic Development.

[www.smadc.com](http://www.smadc.com)

### **SOUTHERN MARYLAND FOOD COUNCIL**



SMADC initiated the creation of the "Southern Maryland Food Council" (SMFC) to address the lingering problems of inadequate nutrition and health in Southern Maryland. The SMFC's mission is to, "Bring together diverse stakeholders to integrate the aspects of the food system (production, distribution, access, consumption, processing and recycling) in order to sustain and enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Southern Maryland."

In 2014, the Southern Maryland Food Council hosted a “Foodways Community Networking” event to discuss diverse food-related issues with the community. Fifty-three people attended from all socio-economic ranges. The event featured round-table discussions, giving participants an opportunity to share their unique experiences and make connections towards resolving food issues. Topics included Future of Farming/ Agriculture in Schools, Food Distribution/ Purchasing Challenges/Food Hubs, Community Gardens, Healthy Food Budgeting/ Nutrition Education/ Childhood Obesity & Disease, and Genetically Modified Organisms/Food Labeling. The discussions were robust and engaging.

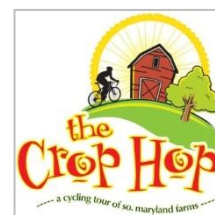
Attendees requested to move forward with small group discussions and asked that the event be held again, perhaps twice a year. Several of these discussion groups have already met and are discussing next steps.

[www.somdfoodcouncil.com](http://www.somdfoodcouncil.com)

## **FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

### **CROP HOP: A CYCLING TOUR OF SO. MARYLAND FARMS**

Always looking for new ways to engage and educate the community about the importance of farms and fresh food, SMADC initiated the Crop Hop in 2012. The Crop Hop is a cycling tour of Southern Maryland farms designed to provide a fun and healthy way to learn about our area’s diverse agriculture, and raise funds to provide fresh, local farm products to low-income communities in Southern Maryland.



The Crop Hop has the three following goals:

- Connect people to the local food system by improving their understanding of local farms
- Promote healthy living through a diet of fresh, local foods and physical activities such as bicycling
- Support those who can’t afford to buy locally produced foods by donating proceeds to a local anti-hunger organization to purchase and distribute fresh local foods.

Now in its second year, the 2103 Crop Hop took place in Charles County, MD and was co-hosted by the Charles County Board of Commissioners. The event is for the avid cyclists, as well as families. 249 riders chose from one of four routes, including a short run for children and families (the Sprout Route). Two grandmothers selected this ride (independent parties), one who had never cycled before, the other not having ridden since she was 16.

Six diverse farms were featured and riders were provided with snacks made with local ingredients. After the ride, participants were provided a picnic featuring locally raised farm foods. The picnic was also open to the public for a fee. Proceeds from the Crop Hop provided over \$800 to the Southern Maryland Food Bank to purchase fresh, local produce for low-income communities in the region.



Local businesses were invited to sponsor the event through monetary or in-kind donations. These were: MOMS grocery, Nationwide Insurance, Charles County Board of Commissioners, La Plata Coca-Cola, Charles County 4-H, Charles County Fair, Colonial Farm Credit, SMECO, Patuxent Adventure Center, Serenity Farms, Southern Maryland Food Bank, Trinity Church (Newport), University of Maryland Extension, College of Southern Maryland, Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club, Middleton’s Cedar Hill Farm, Pax Velo Cycling Club, and Perigeaux Vineyards & Winery.

Partners (2014) include: In addition to the local businesses and sponsors listed above, Charles County Tourism, Planning and Zoning, and Parks Departments, Hancock Farm, El Ammal Farm, Fisher Farm, Inn at Newport, J&M Gazebos, Zekiah Farms, Lefty’s Barbeque.

### 2014 Crop Hop

The 2014 Crop Hop is scheduled for Saturday, October 25, 2014 in Prince George's County. The farms will be Romano's Vineyard and Winery, P.A. Bowen Farmstead, Bald Eagle Farm, SunSplash Farm and Leighton Horse Farm. Additional stops include Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary and Mount Calvert Historical and Archaeological Park. The picnic will take place at Nottingham and will feature canoeing and paddling as well as re-enactments commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the Battle of Bladensburg.

### **Highlights (FY'14):**

- 249 riders participated (up from 185 in 2012, a 25% increase in ridership).
- Crop Hop Facebook posts organically reached 6,602 people, and the website registered 9,942 unique visits (Facebook uses the term "organic" to mean "reach that is not due to paid advertising").
- \$800 benefitted the Southern Maryland Food Bank for the hunger community in Charles County.

[www.crophiop.com](http://www.crophiop.com)   [www.facebook.com/TheCropHop](http://www.facebook.com/TheCropHop)

## **FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

### **MARYLAND BUY LOCAL CHALLENGE**

SMADC created the Buy Local Challenge (BLC) in 2007 to educate the public across Maryland about the benefits of supporting local farms. The challenge is to eat (or drink) something every day from a local farm during the last full week of every July. SMADC's theme, "Healthy Plate, Healthy Planet" conveys many messages about the benefits of buying from local farms, among them personal health, economic health for the region, and health of the environment.



SMADC began by offering promotional materials to the Agricultural Marketing Professionals throughout the state. In 2008, the Maryland Department of Agriculture initiated a Buy Local cookout contest, held at the Governor's mansion each July.

### **BLC 2014**

Each year the BLC grows and gains more excitement. Local legislators endorsed the BLC including the mayors of both Frederick and Baltimore who publicly urged all their employees to take the challenge. Mayor Rawlings-Blake held a press event as part of employee wellness in Baltimore City and teamed up with a local farm to offer a CSA box for the BLC week. Howard County Executive, Ken Ulman, tweeted in support of the BLC.

MDA, the Governor and First Lady O'Malley hosted the seventh annual "Buy Local" cookout. Fourteen teams of local farmers and chefs prepared creative recipes showcasing the diversity of local products, including the Government House chefs, and for the first time, two hospitals (Adventist Healthcare and Union Hospital of Cecil County).

Throughout the entire BLC week MDA, the Governor's Office, sister agencies and SMADC promoted the BLC on social media. During the campaign, the BLC website registered close to 11,000 unique visits, of which 7,560 were new to the challenge. SMADC launched a new BLC Twitter hashtag *#buylocalchallenge* to tweet the latest BLC happenings. Both MDA and SMADC advertised in local media as well on the Washington Post website, to an estimated audience of over 862,000.

100,000 copies of the BLC flyer were included in MVA license renewals and were distributed at farmers markets, libraries and at various events around the state.

SMADC and MDA teamed up to offer the "Take the Challenge to the EXTREME" contest encouraging consumers to take the challenge to the next level. Contestants posted their photos on the BLC Facebook page to win a \$100 gift certificate to MDA's Maryland's Best 'Ice Cream Trail'. The winning entry was the North Beach Queen B's who showcased many different ways to create vegetable dishes. "It was amazing how much healthier we felt all week doing



this, and we will continue through the summer.” Throughout the week, the Queen B's daily charted what each member purchased and where and how they prepared individual dishes. They also provided recipes.

### Hospital Challenge

SMADC also partnered with the Chesapeake Food Leadership Council to invite food service directors, chefs and food purchasing managers of hospitals, institutions and businesses to offer at least one local food every day on their menus during the BLC week. Businesses that participated were recognized in a scrolling banner on the BLC website. Fifty nine health care facilities are now serving local foods regularly on their menus.

### BLC 2013 (SMADC was not able to report this in last year's annual report)

The July 2013 BLC Contest, “Take the Challenge Outdoors” encouraged participants to find creative ways to prepare local foods and beverages ‘outdoors’, and share their experience on-line. The winning entrant provided photos of family and friends enjoying meals made with all-local ingredients purchased from farms and farmer’s markets near Chaptico, St. Mary’s county. “A week of shopping at local shops, produce stands, and farms was so much fun. I have to say, everything I ate was delicious! I continue to buy local today and highly recommend all Marylanders do the same. Not only is it good for our economy, but it’s good for you!” Desiree St. Clair Glass, 2013 BLC contest winner.



St. Clair Glass received a prize basket filled with locally produced farm products valued at \$200. In addition, a \$200 check was presented in the winner’s name to The Southern Maryland Food Bank, received by Food Bank director Brenda Di Carlo. The donation was used to buy fresh, locally grown produce for families in need in Southern Maryland.

The BLC FaceBook page went viral for the week of the BLC with over 5,575 views and growing. Eighty-three percent of the BLC audience is women, the majority in the 35-55 age groups.

### **Highlights (FY’14):**

- SMADC distributed 15,000 fliers on the ‘Take the Challenge to the EXTREME’ regionally.
- MDA distributed 100,000 fliers direct mailed to MD. Residents in MVA license renewals.
- BLC proclamations were made by County Commissioners in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s County, by Prince George’s, and was officially recognized by Anne Arundel County.
- Baltimore and Frederick County Mayors, and the Howard County Executive endorsed the BLC.
- Numerous independent articles, press notices, TV, radio and ads reached a combined audience over 862,000 people.
- The BLC Facebook page averaged 1,300 ‘likes’ daily during the challenge week into August.

Partners include: Maryland Agricultural Marketing Professionals (AMPS), Maryland Department of Agriculture, Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (MD H2E), Chesapeake Food Leadership Council, Maryland’s Governor O’Malley.

[www.buy-local-challenge.com](http://www.buy-local-challenge.com)

## **PROVIDING FARMERS RESOURCES TO BE PROFITABLE**

### **SOUTHERN MARYLAND MEAT INDUSTRY**

Identifying the strong desire for local meat from consumers, and the lack of farms producing local meat, SMADC took on the challenge of building the local meat industry. A major challenge continues to be the lack of USDA meat processing facilities. Farmers report having to transport livestock for three or four hours to the nearest facility and often face wait lists that can be up to a year. As with all SMADC initiatives, building a program has many facets, from educating farmers, providing infrastructure and a marketing platform, to streamlining regulations.



#### **Farm Share Equipment: Freezer Trailers**

In 2011, SMADC provided funds for two freezer trailers to transport farmers' meat products from USDA slaughtering/processing plants to farm or retail stores. All Southern Maryland meat producers are able to rent the trailers. St. Mary's County Farm Bureau and Prince George's County Farm Bureau manage the trailers. Thus, the Southern Maryland Meats (SMM) program was launched.

#### **Southern Maryland Meats Brand**

The "*Southern Maryland Meats*" brand, co-created by SMADC and producers, assures the quality of the meat and consistency in raising and feeding practices. SMM standards and application criteria are continually evaluated by the SMM Steering Committee to ensure they are in line with USDA guidelines. In FY'14, SMM added standards for Bison and Eggs. As one SMM Farm (Serenity Farm) commented, "SMM inspires confidence in buyers, and gives the meats a 'stamp of approval', or vetting beyond USDA standards". Consumers report they like the ability to source local meats and special order custom cuts and processing.

#### **Licensing**

Producers must obtain a license in Maryland to sell USDA-inspected meat directly to retail stores and restaurants. To help producers through the licensing process, SMADC developed an on-line tutorial, which has been endorsed by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and is used by producers statewide. In Southern Maryland, 33 producers have thus far obtained their licenses, facilitated by SMADC and regional agricultural marketing staff. Six new licenses were issued in FY '14.

#### **Workshops**

SMADC annually partners with the MDA to host a Poultry and Rabbit Processing Workshop. In FY'14, 30 producers attended. Additionally, SMADC held two workshops on meat pricing and marketing strategies to help producers accurately establish a breakeven price. Trailer use reports indicate producers are beginning to adjust the value of their product commensurate with production costs showing an average price per pound increase of 8.5%.

#### **SMM Website**

SMADC added a list of USDA processing facilities within the Mid-Atlantic Region, interactive marketing tools for establishing pricing, a marketing tip sheet and calendar for ethnic meat sales to the SMM website for farmers. Consumers are encouraged to use a "QR" code to find meat producers. In July 2013, the SMM website received over 660 unique visits and since the addition of the new resource materials and launch of the consumer promo-card; over 1,100 unique visits were recorded in the first six months of 2014.

**Promotion:** SMADC published the first Meats and Seafood Directory for the region in 2012, which is available on-line and in print. Over 15,000 printed guides have been distributed.

The SMM brand is actively showcased at public events around the region and was the center piece of the SMADC exhibit at the 2013 Sotterley Wine Festival featuring SMM meats prepared by local chefs and interviews with SMM producers. The SMADC exhibit also provided resources to connect consumers with SMM retail venues and farms. Over five thousand people attended the two-day festival.



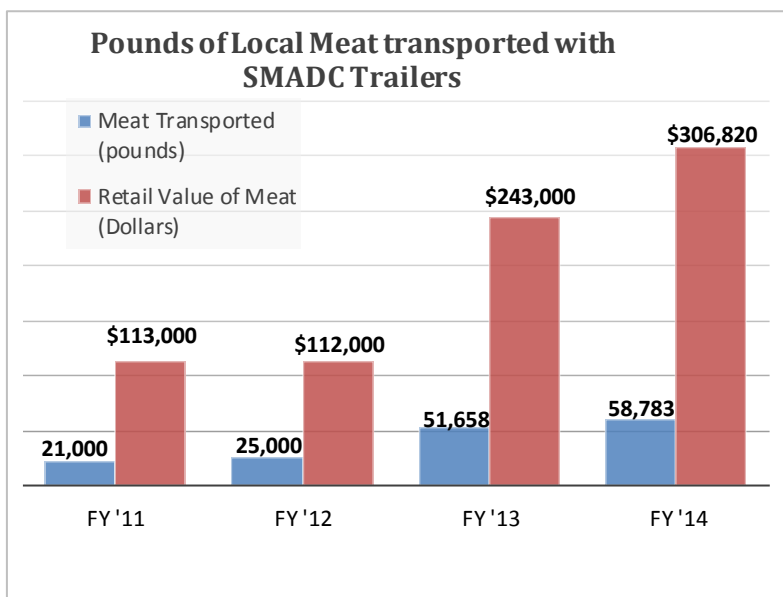
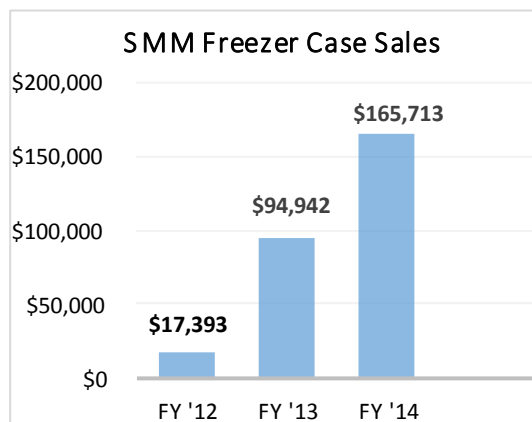
## Results

Reports in FY '14 show steady rise in the use of the trailers with over 58,000 pounds of product transported for an estimated retail value of \$306,820. This is an increase of over 170 percent since the inception of the Southern Maryland Meats program. And, 40 producers have now joined the SMM program (seven in FY '14).

In FY '14, SMADC provided additional grants to purchase three new pieces of equipment (livestock scales and cattle squeeze chute) for rent by any producer in the five-counties. The managing entities are the Charles County Farm Bureau and the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation.

## Marketing at Retail Venues

SMADC also provided funds to purchase commercial freezer display cases to promote sales of Southern Maryland Meats directly to the public. Eight retail display cases are now located at farm market stores and independent grocery stores (2 in Calvert, 1 in Charles, 1 in Prince George's, 1 in Anne Arundel and 3 in St. Mary's). Since the beginning of the program, sales have increased over nine times from \$17,393 in reported sales (FY'12) to \$165,713 in FY'14, with is an increase of over 74% since FY'13.



The program has shown successes in increasing retail sales and consumer awareness of local meat producers, but it has had its challenges. SMADC continues to work closely with the managing entities to insure placement, maintenance and monitoring of the display cases is optimized. The display case use agreement has also been updated to require mandatory bi-annual service to minimize the instance of repairs and insure proper care.

SMM participants continue to report an increase in meat sales after joining the SMM program (average 20 percent increase in FY'14). "My operation has grown from selling eight quarters a year to selling 36 quarters a year" (Bald Eagle Farm, Prince George's County, 2014).

Two part-time interns, jointly funded by SMADC, St. Mary's Farm Bureau and Prince George's Farm Bureau, came on board in FY'14 to help coordinate the SMM program. The interns significantly enhanced the program's ability to provide marketing and livestock consultation support to producers and retailers. They streamlined reporting procedures, improved protocols for SMM standards/application forms and biosecurity measures for farm visits, provided oversight of the SMM freezer cases, and increased communication and information among farmers and consumers.

## Awards and Recognition

In April 2014, SMADC/SMM received the MEDA Economic Marketing and Development Award in recognition of significant results achieved for an overall marketing initiative. Pamela Ruff, Executive Director of MEDA commented, "Consumers are increasingly aware of the value of local food and farms. Southern Maryland Meats helped local farmers capitalize on this awareness, and market their products in a powerful way."

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Two new informational brochures are in development to help consumers and retailers get the best value from their custom, wholesale or retail purchase including types of cuts they can expect from each species, how to complete a processing 'cut sheet' to suit their culinary and budget needs, cooking tips and more. The brochures will be available in print and on the SMM website. SMM is currently developing a dedicated Facebook page.

A conference, planned for November 2014, will provide a networking forum for producers and retailers to increase retailer awareness for the availability of local meats, livestock traceability and other regulatory updates, bio-security, genetics and animal selection, and insurance planning.

The purchase of a third smaller freezer trailer has been proposed to facilitate the transportation of small ruminant (pigs, sheep, goat, etc.) meats. The larger freezer trailers are not always cost efficient for long distance transportation for the small animal producers unless aggregation of more than one producers' product can be arranged to fill the entire storage area.

Partners include: St. Mary's County Farm Bureau, Prince George's County Farm Bureau, St. Mary's County Economic Development, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation, Calvert County Economic Development, Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup, Prince George's UME and Soil Conservation District, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Keepin' It Local, Forrest Hall Farm Store, Cooksey's Store, The Honey Hive, Montpelier Farm Store, Chesapeake's Bounty, Spider Hall Farm Shop, Home Grown Farm Market, LLC.

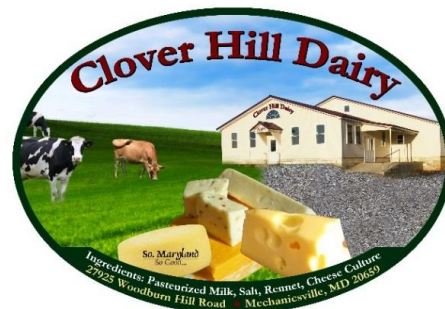
### **Highlights: Cumulative**

- 40 producers participate in SMM (7 new in FY'14).
- Over 58,000 pounds transported using the trailers in FY'14 with an estimated retail value of \$306,800.
- 8 retail venues host retail SMM display cases, at least one case in each of the 5 counties.
- Retail host venues report 74% increase in display case sales in FY'13 (\$165,700).
- Introduction of bison and egg application standards.
- Sotterley Wine Fest features SMM meats.
- New point of purchase card developed for retail and consumer education.
- MEDA award for overall marketing initiative (2014).

[www.southernmaryndmeats.com](http://www.southernmaryndmeats.com)

## **DAIRY INDUSTRY**

**THE NEED / CHALLENGE:** In 2011, SMADC was solicited by members of the Amish farming community in St. Mary's county to assist with state regulatory requirements to obtain a permit for Grade 'M' production for cheese sourced from community dairy farms. Dairy enterprises in Maryland must be permitted either Grade A or Grade M to process and manufacture milk products. Regulatory requirements are complex and costly for the individual farmer, and as a result most of the bulk milk produced by Southern Maryland farms is transported out of the region to large processing facilities. Products made with local milk rarely return to area therefore inhibiting the potential for farms to capitalize on value-added production.



### **WHAT'S SMADC DOING?**

From 2011 to spring of 2014, SMADC staff facilitated meetings with state Center for Milk Control and Clover Hill Dairy to streamline communications and navigate regulatory issues for approval of the pasteurization equipment. One barrier was the Amish requirement for non-standard electricity. SMADC staff, in conjunction with Senator Mac Middleton, Delegate John D. Wood, and Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance, and St. Mary's County Seafood and Agriculture Department guided a break-through meeting between Clover Hill Dairy, the Maryland Center of Milk Control and dairy engineers to approve a non-standard power source (24 volt direct current), and operating equipment and facility plans (lighting, waste removal, piping, ventilation, storage). "SMADC helped us understand what we needed to do to get the dairy procedure manual written correctly and approved quickly. They also worked with State to arrange meetings and inspections and get our power approved. It would have been way too difficult and taken a lot longer without them." Jacob Fisher, Clover Hill Dairy Board Member.



Clover Hill Dairy received their operating permit in March 2014 and is the first cheese dairy in Southern Maryland to receive a Grade 'M' (Manufacture) permit from the state. Staff at Maryland Center for Milk and Dairy Product Safety acknowledged that planning and permit approval for the dairy facility would not have been completed in a timely fashion to the high standards required for industry production without SMADC's assistance. "Without their (SMADC) help - there is no doubt that the dairy would not be up and running at this time. SMADC staff was instrumental in working with the dairy to develop their standard operating procedures which was a tremendously huge (and also extremely important) task. A huge benefit not only to the dairy, but to our office as well." Kirk Engle, Section Head, Center for Milk & Dairy Product Safety.



The completed dairy facility houses two large stainless steel cheese vats with the capacity to hold 2,000 gallons of milk, producing more than 1,000 pounds of cheese each production cycle. The two-story cheese house complex includes a contained milk off-loading bay, walk-in refrigerated storage, packing areas, office, changing rooms and an approved farm-market store for retailing Clover Hill cheese and other locally produced farm products (produce, jams, acidified foods, baked goods).

Bulk milk supply for Clover Hill Dairy is sourced from 16 local dairy farms in St. Mary's and Charles counties and has the potential to increase production to benefit more than 20 dairy farms. Nine individual cheese recipes are approved (Latin American Curd Cheese, Cheddar Cheese, Colby and Jack varieties). In the first three months of operation (April through June 2014), the dairy produced 12,000 pounds of cheese for an estimated retail value of \$54,000.

In June 2014, Clover Hill landed its first bulk contract for Latin American curd cheese for 4,000 pounds of cheese per week, with an estimated revenue \$48,000 per month.

Partners Include: Clover Hill Cheese House, Center for Milk & Dairy Product Safety, DHMH Office of Food Protection, Rowlands Engineering, Harbor Designs Engineering, St. Mary's County Government, Maryland Department of Agriculture, St. Mary's County Health Department.

**Highlights (FY'14):**

- First Grade "M" dairy in Southern Maryland.
- SMADC assisted with regulatory process to certify manufacture grade production with non-standard electric power.
- Two, 2,000 gallon milk vats produce more than 2,000 pounds of cheese twice weekly.
- 16 dairy farms benefit and more than 20 estimated for full production.
- 9 recipes certified for production (Latin American Curd Cheese, Cheddar Cheese, Colby and Jack).
- Production for first 3 months approximately 12,000 pounds of pasteurized cheese.
- \$54,000 in estimated product retail value (April – June 2014).
- Approved onsite retail farm market selling cheese product.
- \$48,000 estimated per month from first bulk contract in June 2014 (4,000 pounds per week).

**EQUINE INDUSTRY**

Southern Maryland's horse stables and farms are helping to preserve the rural landscape and stimulate the trajectory of the regional economy by bringing together communities through equine sports events, recreational activities, and as vibrant tourism destinations. According to a 2012 Schaefer Center for Public Policy survey of 1,000 Maryland households, 14.5% have family members who ride or actively attend equestrian events, 44.5% have some interest in riding horses and other horse related activities.

SMADC has held three-day equine conferences for hay growers and horse owners providing resources and education for equine-related businesses and in particular identify new areas of mutual opportunity for existing agricultural farms and the burgeoning equine industry.

SMADC published the first equine guide in the state in 2009, it was updated in 2012.

Currently in Southern Maryland there are:

- 3,210 equine establishments (boarding facilities, commercial and private breeding, farms, recreational and commercial properties).
- 87 MHIB licensed equine facilities (Anne Arundel 34, Prince George's 21, Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's 32 collectively).
- 61 facilities supported by SMADC's Equine Guide.
- Over 30,000 acres attributed to equine businesses in Southern Maryland (2010 Maryland Equine Census).
- Employing over 6,000 people.
- Total capital expenditure of over \$57 million dollars.

To capitalize on the potential of this industry, in FY'15, SMADC will partner with Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) to begin work on a Southern Maryland Historic Horse Trail highlighting the role of horses in the state's history and to educate consumers to the opportunity for equine-related activities and events. The Southern MD trail will be one of three historic horse trails planned for the state (Baltimore, Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland). Local tourism leaders, equine community members, owners and curators of prospective sites will be enlisted to assist.



## WINE INDUSTRY

### Research

Recognizing the need for Maryland grapes to supply the emerging Maryland wine sector, SMADC provided a series of research grants to the University of Maryland to explore varieties that would perform well in Southern Maryland's climate and soils. Since 2003, when the university research began, over 27 varieties have been evaluated.

### SMADC's Two Grant Programs

#### Growing Grapes for Wine Grant program

Once a number of suitable varieties had been identified, SMADC teamed up with the University to offer beginning and advanced grape grower workshops, and a matching grape grant program to incentivize serious growers.



This grant program was established in 2006 and became a prototype for a statewide program. The grant provides matching funds for the purchase of grape vines. Vines are ordered in bulk quantities, thereby reducing the cost to individual growers. In FY'14, five farmers were awarded the grant, providing 6,900 new vines to be grown on eight new acres. Since the grant program began, 14 farms have participated and grapes are grown on 43 acres.

#### SMADC's Farm Viability Enhancement Grant Program

In FY'14, three farms expanded their vineyards through the Farm Viability Grant Program, adding an additional 11 acres. Through this program, a total acreage of 25 acres is now under grapes and two farms have plans to add wineries to their enterprises and double their acres within two years.

Approximately 68 acres of wine grapes have been added in Southern Maryland through these two SMADC grant programs (18 added in FY'14).

#### Farm Share: Grape Growing Equipment

SMADC funds provided to the St. Mary's County Farm Bureau to purchase a tractor and vineyard hedger/trimmer in late 2013 for rent.

#### Wine at Farmers' Markets Legislation

SMADC partnered with St. Mary's County and other entities to support legislation to allow wineries to sell at farmers' markets. The bill was passed in 2013 and as a result wine is now sold at farmers' markets in all five counties.



#### Port of Leonardtown Winery and Cooperative

SMADC was pleased to partner with the Maryland Agricultural and Resource-based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO), the St. Mary's County Board of Commissioners, and the Town of Leonardtown to facilitate completion of the Port of Leonardtown Winery. This winery and tasting room was opened to the public in the fall of 2010 and now supports a cooperative of 19 grape growers throughout Southern Maryland, many of whom were previous recipients of SMADC's *Growing Grapes for Wine* grants.

#### Economic benefit of vines

One acre of vineyard can be expected to produce between 3-5 tons of fruit. Assuming an average of four tons per acre and an average price of \$1200/ton, one can estimate a yield of \$4,800 per acre. This amounts to a total of \$206,400 that could be obtained from these 68 acres in time (\$86,400 accruing from the 18 acres added in FY'14 representing a 42% increase).

### Wineries

According to the Maryland Wineries Association, “the Maryland wine industry has begun to prosper in Southern Maryland due to SMADC’s attention and support.” There are currently 12 licensed wineries in Southern Maryland, with more on the way in the next few years.

### Economic benefit of wineries

One ton of grapes yields about 150 gallons of wine, which produces roughly 65 cases of wine. At an average of four tons/acre, one acre of grapes at full maturation will yield 260 cases. One case of wine can sell anywhere between \$100 and \$300, thus one acre of grapes can bring an average of \$52,000 in wine sales.

### Promotion and outreach

SMADC once again hosted a chefs tasting tent at the Sotterley Plantation’s Riverside Winefest. Local chefs gave culinary demonstrations showcasing Southern Maryland wines and meats from Calvert, Charles, Prince George’s and St. Mary’s counties. Wine pairing and tastings were hosted by the Maryland Wineries Association. Kevin Atticks, Executive Director of the Maryland Wineries Association said “SMADC’s Buy Local seminars at the Riverside WineFest at Sotterley was the perfect fusion of local wine, local produce and meats and local chefs, designed to educate and entice festival goers into learning about local agriculture.”

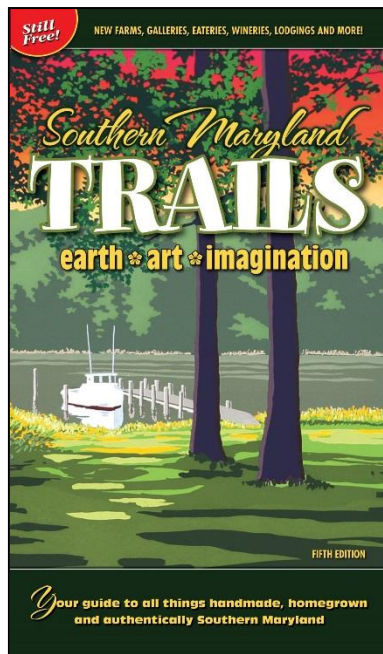


*Chef Loic Jaffres (Café des Artistes) at cooking demonstration and wine parings, Sotterley 2013 Riverside Winefest.*



## AGRITOURISM INDUSTRY

### SOUTHERN MARYLAND TRAILS: EARTH, ART, IMAGINATION



Cultural tourism continues to grow as a lucrative alternative for regional farms and businesses.

SMADC has connected area farms with arts, eateries and other public venues and businesses to enhance cross promotion, profit opportunities and build a sense of local awareness and community.

This cultural program provides economic benefit to Southern Maryland by developing farms for agritourism and offering visitors a unique and authentic experience of the region's culture and living heritage. The program facilitates innovative partnerships between farms, artists, related heritage sites, parks and businesses. The program also seeks to educate the local community on the importance of sustaining Southern Maryland's natural beauty and rural character. Workshops, networking opportunities, and promotional materials are provided for partner sites. The trails guide features individual trails sites as well as themed day and weekend itineraries.

As farmers connect more directly with consumers, agritourism has become a growing segment of Maryland agriculture and an important source of income for our farmers. Agritourism sales grew 142% in Southern Maryland between 2007 and 2012 according to the 2012 USDA Census data (see intro). Agritourism has provided

not only an additional revenue stream but also enhanced sales of value-added products directly to consumers.

The Trails program began with a series of community listening sessions throughout the region. Building on the ideas captured from the community, SMADC initiated a series of workshops and a trip to North Carolina to visit a successful model program. Within one year, the first Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination Guidebook was published (in 2006).

#### Education and Promotion

In response to community request and need, SMADC subsequently provided numerous workshops and conferences on agritourism addressing joint marketing, liability, business partnerships, etc.

For the first three editions, partners were listed at no cost as a way to build the industry. In subsequent editions, partners have been asked to pay a fee to be listed, and SMADC has actively solicited ads in the book. In June of 2014, SMADC released the fifth edition of the *Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination* guidebook which includes 139 trails partner sites on the three routes. This edition includes 34 new partner sites. Revenues from partner listings totaled \$10,875 which helped offset the cost of publishing the book. Twenty seven advertisements brought an additional revenue of \$10,200.

The 2014 updated Trails website now features an interactive map with addresses, contact information and descriptions of each site location allowing the public to map their own Trails adventure.

The fifth edition of the guidebook is in high demand. As one partner informed us, "they just flew off the shelves." SMADC also plans to distribute the sought after guidebook at county fairs and other public events throughout the year.

#### **Highlights (Cumulative since inception in 2006):**

- \$21,200 for advertisements in trail guide gathered.
- Numerous workshops and networking events hosted.
- National and international interest garnered.

- 2006 Maryland Tourism Industry Council Award received.
- 2-10 employee positions per tourism site created.
- Agritourism sales grew 142% in Southern Maryland between 2007 and 2012 according to the 2012 USDA Census data.

Partners include: St. Mary's County Tourism, all Trails partners.

[www.somdtrails.com](http://www.somdtrails.com)

## **AGRITOURISM HIGHWAY SIGNS: MARYLAND PILOT PROGRAM**

Due to the unique geographic characteristics of Southern Maryland, the majority of Southern Maryland's agritourism farms are located 'off the beaten track', remote from the main public thoroughfares. Although the region is centrally linked by state highways, local feeder roads terminate as the region is surrounded by water, thus inhibiting the potential for drive-by visibility and direct access to farm destinations.

In partnership with Charles County Government, SMADC initiated a series of discussions with Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and local farmers to create a program that permits highway signs directing the public to agritourism farms, similar to approved SHA signage for wineries. The group developed a series of guidelines for farms and finalized the agreement on the fabrication, installation and maintenance of the highway signs.

Eligibility criteria for the program requires participating farms to be open to the public a minimum of six months of the year (at least four days a week and at least six hours a day). Farms must also have an established (or self-guided) educational tour and/or host public events, such as festivals, fairs or workshops. Each individual county must agree to participate in the program. SHA and MDA have the authority to approve applications and determine the number of signs applicable.



The pilot-signage program was launched in the fall of 2013. The "Ag-tourism Signing Program" was adopted by the state and is now available to farms in other counties. Two Charles County farms, Serenity Farm in Benedict and Zekiah Farms in Bryantown, were approved for SHA signs, which were installed in March 2014. A third farm in Frederick County is pending approval.

The cost of the signs can be prohibitive, therefore SMADC agreed to provide grant funds to farms on a limited basis.

### **Highlights:**

- SMADC announced grants for up to \$1,500 in matching funds for the purchase and installation of signs for up to three farms each in the five counties.
- 2 Charles county farms approved for state signage in FY'14
- MDA has received interest from 5 farms in the state, however the respective counties must agree to the program before farm applications can be accepted. Prince George's, Harford, and Cecil counties are in the process of implementing a program. One farm is pending approval - Rocky Point Creamery in Frederick County.
- 3 Southern Maryland farms are also in process pending local county approval - Montpelier Farms, PA Bowen Farmstead and Forrest Hall Farm.
- An MDA press release announced the program to farms across the state in July 2014.

Partners include: Charles County Planning and Zoning, Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Business and Development, Maryland Department of Agriculture, Charles County Farmers.

## **SO. MARYLAND, SO GOOD: MARKETING SOUTHERN MARYLAND**

*So. Maryland, So Good (SMSG)* – This three-fold campaign seeks to directly link farmers and buyers, add value to local agricultural products through the use of an identifiable brand (logo), and educate consumers about the benefits of buying from and supporting local farms.

### **Highlights:**

- Data from the latest USDA National agricultural census data show that from 2007 to 2012, the value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption grew 58% in Southern Maryland. Direct sales grew by \$1.6 million in Southern Maryland, with growth in all five counties

### **FY'14**

- 2013 Equine Guide lists 61 equine businesses, of which 46 were new since the 2007 guide (75% new). In partnership with the Maryland Horse Industry Board, SMADC will establish a Horse History Trail for MD in FY'15.
- 348 (10 new in FY'14) (338 in FY '13) farms are listed throughout all of SMSG websites and guides in 2014.
- 2014/15 Farmers' Market Guide – lists 31 Southern Maryland markets and 12 additional markets in MD, Metro DC and VA that host Southern MD farm vendors.
- 2013/14 Farms for the Holiday's Guide – lists 62 agricultural businesses (wineries, farms, and seafood).
- Meat and Seafood Directory (published in 2012) lists 17 Southern Maryland Meats program producers, 7 non-SMM meat producers and 15 seafood producers.
- 6 SMADC/SMSG workshops benefitted 144 individuals/farm businesses
- SMADC website visits doubled in FY'14 (131,000 visits, 51,000 unique)

## **MARYLAND TOBACCO BUYOUT**

This is the fourteenth and final year of the Tobacco Buyout. Ninety-two percent of the 1998 eligible tobacco has been taken out of production forever for human consumption as 854 growers have taken Maryland's Tobacco Buyout. This represents 7.65 million pounds of tobacco and 83% of Maryland's producers. The 10-year buyout payment stream ended in January 2014, as the last of the Buyout payments were made. SMADC will continue collect data on the last recipients to assure compliance with the state contracts.

## FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### **CORNELIA AND THE FARM BAND PROGRAM** Addressing Childhood Health and Obesity

SMADC's Cornelia and the Farm Band innovative program was created to educate and excite children and their families about the long term benefits of good health, tasty foods, and supporting local farms. It addresses serious topics such as childhood obesity and exercise in fun and creative ways. The program has grown over the years, and touches children and their families in many diverse venues.

SMADC has developed curriculum for grades Kindergarten through 12 in line with the Maryland State Curriculum. Now in its eighth year, much of the educational package is available to view and download from our [www.Let'sGotoAFarm.com](http://www.Let'sGotoAFarm.com) website for individual classroom and home schooling venues. These materials also continue to be widely distributed at public events and *Farm to School* activities.



#### Farm to School (Maryland Homegrown Week):

The goal of Farm to School Week is to encourage the use of locally grown

produce in school meals, to promote community partnerships, and to help connect students to local farmers. SMADC's mascot, Cornelia attended four elementary schools, reaching 1,696 students throughout the "week" in FY'14. They helped children understand the importance of local farm foods and helped them identify some of the many fun outdoor activities they can do at local farms. In the words of one elementary school counselor, "...Yesterday was the BEST day ever! I think it was so educational and well run by you (SMADC) and the farmers who put their hearts, sweat and souls into the presentations." Since 2009, Cornelia has reached over 16,102 students in schools.



#### Ag Literacy Program

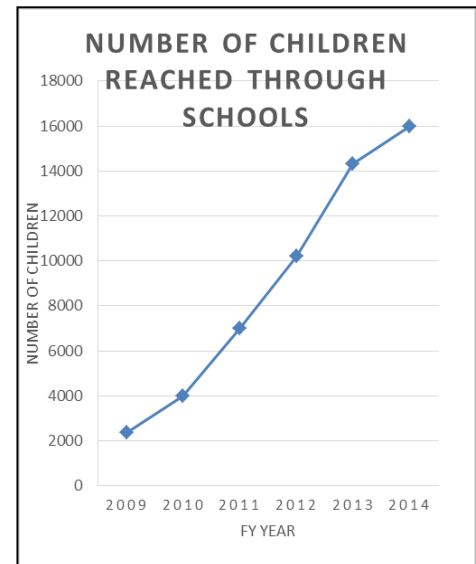
In connection with Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation and Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation, Cornelia gave a presentation and participated in the Ag Literacy Reading Program "What's in the Garden?" by Marianne Berkes. 100 children were reached (Folger McKinsey Elementary School).

#### Agriculture Education Day

Cornelia attended the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Agriculture Education Day at Y Worry Farm in Anne Arundel County. The event featured music, games, food, activities for kids and a pick your own pumpkin patch. Over 1,800 people attended, of which about 500 were children. SMADC also distributed marketing materials during the event.

#### Blue Crabs Baseball Game

In June 2014, SMADC sponsored their second Southern Maryland Blue Crabs baseball game attended by patrons and over 1,000 Maryland Girl Scout troops. The mascots and staff interacted with the crowd, conveying messages about farms and SMADC programs. 6,755 people attended. This year SMADC launched the Cornelia and Couch Potato "First Pitch" contest. Viewers voted to determine who would have the honor of throwing the first pitch. Couch Potato won by a slight margin.





### Bowie Baysox Baseball Game

On Father's Day, SMADC sponsored a Bowie Baysox game with Cornelia and Couch Potato. Similar to the Blue Crabs game, SMADC staff spoke prior to the game, displayed banners and distributed marketing materials. Three of Cornelia's animated songs were featured on the big screen. Highlight included Cornelia's first pitch and radio announcements through the summer about SMADC's programs. Cornelia and Couch interacted with close to 6,000 Baysox fans.



### Fairs

Cornelia and Couch are now a popular attraction at the local County Fairs where they pass their messages to parents and children, and encourage people to visit the SMADC booth. For the first time, this year, Cornelia and Couch Potato participated in the St. Mary's County Parade. Countless connections with parents and children, some of whom remembered Cornelia from her visits to their schools, were made. Since 2012, Cornelia and the Farm Band have reached nearly 19,000 children with their messages through special events. 1,850 coloring books were distributed.



### Marine Corps Marathon – Healthy Kid Fun Run

In October, Cornelia and Couch Potato attended the Marine Corps Marathon – Healthy Kid Fun Run. They interacted with a portion of the estimated 3,600 kids that participated in the run. The event was well attended and Cornelia and Couch were very well received.

### Teachers Night at the Farm

To expand Cornelia's reach beyond Southern Maryland, the mascot and staff attended the Teachers Night at the Farm in Baltimore County. Over 100 teachers from multiple counties attended.

### Highlights (FY'14)

- Approximately 10,400 new children were reached at the special events and schools, well over 20% since FY'13.
- Since 2011, over 20,500 children have been reached through special events.
- Since 2009, over 16,000 school children have been reached at schools.

## **FOOD, FARMS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: FUTURE**

### **MARYLAND FARMLINK**

#### **THE NEED / CHALLENGE:**

The 2012 Census of Agriculture confirms that Maryland is not replacing its farmers. There are now eight times more farm operators 65 and older than 34 and younger. Forty-one percent of all farmer operators in Maryland are 65 and older. A 2013 study from the American Farm Bureau Federation reports that securing adequate land to grow crops and raise livestock is the top concern of young farmers.



#### **WHAT'S SMADC DOING?**

SMADC's Maryland FarmLINK program is designed to help aspiring farmers locate farmland and find mentors and business partners. FarmLINK also provides a forum for all farmers to exchange valuable information, such as where to find equipment for rent, educational opportunities, and general topics of interest. The Maryland FarmLINK website aspires to be a one-stop shop for farm resources in Maryland.

#### **Property Exchange**

Those seeking farmland are finding properties through FarmLINK for sale or lease, but challenges remain. First, land values in Maryland are nearly three times the national average and it is very difficult for beginning farmers to qualify for farm loans. Second, farmland owners appear reluctant to make their land available for lease, a preferred option for many beginning farmers. Third, most farmland offered for sale is sold through a realtor, but most realtors, particularly those outside the region, are not familiar with the unique characteristics of selling farmland, and may not be aware that Maryland FarmLINK exists.

To overcome these challenges, staff directly reached out to real estate agents, Farm Bureau groups, land conservancy associations and land trusts, to expand the list of properties available on Maryland FarmLINK. SMADC's FarmLINK Director has become certified to teach realtors about the planning and zoning issues related to selling farmland, including land preservation options, right to farm legislation, and permitting. In FY'14, staff worked with MDA and the University of Maryland to conduct six realtor training classes and 10 farmer sessions. This model is not just a first for Maryland, but for the nation, and SMADC's FarmLINK is receiving interest from New England and California.

There are currently 72 farm properties listed the FarmLINK website (2014). Updates to the website management will allow FarmLINK to collect cumulative data on posted properties, however, to protect the confidentiality of property sales, FarmLINK has not been able to monitor when a property has been successfully sold at this time.

#### **Land Lease Options**

SMADC/FarmLINK made a concerted effort to establish a lease format for farmland. In 2012, the University of Maryland undertook this effort and developed a lease prototype. There are now 24 farms available for lease through FarmLINK (up from 10).

#### **New and Beginning Farmers**

In 2012, Maryland FarmLINK brought together new farmers to gauge interest in forming a regional Young Farmers' group. The group subsequently formed a very active "Young Farmers' Brigade" Facebook page. In one year, it has grown from 176 members to 225 members this year and is a resource for farmer news and events in Southern Maryland and the metropolitan region.



In FY'14, staff formed a new group of beginning farmers who meet on a regular basis to help SMADC learn how to best support the next generation of farmers. The new group, called the Starting, Transitioning, and Returning (START) Farmers' Network, has also highlighted the need to bring together Farm Bureau and non-Farm Bureau farmers, to advocate for Farm-to-Table farmers, and to have a place to share ideas, hopes and resources. Thus far, 50 farmers representing all 5 counties are attending the meetings and/or regularly receive information via email or through the SMADC/FarmLINK webpage.



### New Farmer Incubation

FarmLINK is working with a Prince George's County land trust to create an incubator farm. FarmLINK has also initiated discussions with a local foundation in St. Mary's County for a long-term lease for new farmer incubation with a special emphasis on returning veterans. A portion of this land may also be used to grow food for the Hub and Spoke Program. And, finally, SMADC is looking into the possibility of securing land for the purposes of creating an agricultural center for the region, which would include new farmer incubation.

### Mentor Match Program

In the fall of 2012, the Maryland Collaborative for Beginning Farmers Success was awarded funding from the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program. SMADC is a partner in the grant, along with Future Harvest CASA, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and the University of Maryland Extension (the lead agency). This grant provides funding for the Maryland FarmLINK Mentor Match program which pairs experienced farmers (mentors) with new or transitioning farm owners/operators (mentees) for one-on-one training, advice and interaction. The grant funds allowed the Mentor Match program to expand to young and new farmers state-wide. The year-long mentoring experience is enhanced with support from the Maryland FarmLINK Mentor Team, which provides technical assistance in farm production, business management, regulations, marketing and funding resources. The Mentor Match Program will run for one more year, and applications will be accepted throughout the year. Invitations to apply began in FY'14. To date, 29 applications have been received and six matches have been formalized, along with several informal matches.

### Farm Forum

FarmLINK's Farm Forum provides a platform for farmers to share information and initiate discussions on-line.

### Education and Workshops Calendar

FarmLINK maintains a current calendar of upcoming seminars, workshops and other educational opportunities around the state and region, averaging 30-50 listings.

Additionally, staff maintains the following resources to help farmers get access to land or expand their operation:

- Step-by-step tutorial on "How to Find Soils Analysis Information."
- Zoning tutorial describing planning and zoning for those wishing to start a new farm enterprise.
- "Guide to Land Preservation in Maryland."
- "Tools" page with links to the Farm Share Equipment and other SMADC tutorials, such as the "Guide to Acidified Foods."
- "Realtors Guide to Selling and Leasing Farmland" and a listing of realtors who have taken the FarmLINK Realtor's class.
- Facebook page which is rapidly growing (viewers increased 78% to 336 likes in 2014).
- Twitter feed posting the top 15 -30 tweets per week on current farming stories and events around the state and country. 289 followers in 2014, an increase from 128 followers in 2013.
- Weekly blog providing local perspectives on national stories about farming, marketing, and new farmers. 3,000 to 9,000 views per month.
- Weekly Roundup summarizing and highlighting the best of the week on Maryland FarmLINK. 1098 subscribers, an 83% increase from 2013.
- Calendar current listing an average 30-50 upcoming seminars, workshops and other educational opportunities around the state and region.

### Outreach

The popularity of the Maryland FarmLINK website continues to grow. In FY'14, the website picked up 595 members, an increase of 82%. The number of website visits grew 39%, from 38,000 to 53,000. SMADC's FarmLINK regularly posts current agricultural reports on marketing, food hubs, food processing regulations, etc. Last September, FarmLINK began specifically logging the number of *beginning* farmers joining the website. 126 beginning farmers have recently joined for a total of 175 farmers.

### What's Next?

In 2014, staff has already scheduled more realtor classes, and expects property postings will continue to increase. Staff is also working directly with property owners and farm seekers to help facilitate sale and leases.

With the Mentor Match grant, SMADC is able to provide more of its resources throughout the state. Farmer challenges and opportunities do not stop at a county line or a region. The farmer programs and laws that affect us are statewide. All farms benefit from FarmLINK resources, and have access to information about workshop and events, forums, and mentorship opportunities, etc. to other areas of the state.

### **Highlights (FY'14)**

- 72 properties posted
- 60 new posts
- 595 new members (82% increase from 2013)
- 126 new beginning farmer members
- 175 new farmer members
- 6 mentor matches
- 50 START farmers meeting regularly
- Nationwide interest in the model program: *California FarmLink* and *Land for Good* (the New England landlink website) have asked for assistance in setting up a realtor training program, similar to our program)

Maryland FarmLINK Partners include: Accokeek Foundation, Anne Arundel Parks and Recreation Department, Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation, Calvert County Land Planning and Zoning, Charles County Land Planning and Zoning, Future Harvest, Prince George's County Soil Conservation District, Prince George's County UME, St. Mary's County Economic Development, University of Maryland Extension, Maryland Agricultural Conflict Resolution Service of the Maryland Department of Agriculture, University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the Maryland Beginning Farmer Success Project.

[www.marylandfarmlink.com](http://www.marylandfarmlink.com)

### **AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION:**

Land preservation is a high priority for SMADC and the region, as Southern Maryland has been one of the fastest growing areas in the state. The average age of the tobacco farmer is now well into their 70's. SMADC's funds permit the counties to place a priority on former tobacco farms through matching funds. These funds assure that farmland will persist not just for today, but for farmers and food production into the future.

### **Highlights (FY'14):**

- Three farms containing 182 acres have been directly preserved by the program in four counties of Southern Maryland in FY'14, resulting in 14,980 acres cumulative over the 12 years of program funding (just SMADC program funds, 1 Charles, 1 Prince George's, 1 St. Mary's).\*
- 270 farms containing 31,635 acres have been preserved in Southern Maryland with SMADC and leveraged funds by the counties.
- The FY'15 goal has been revised to increase the total number of preserved acres to an estimated 33,000 acres.  
\*Note: Acres reported at the end of each fiscal year include properties that are approved by the counties and waiting settlement, thus funds are encumbered for those specific properties and attributed to this fiscal year.

Note: SMADC plans to issue an in-depth report on the impact of its land preservation programs in 2015.

## **FARM SHARE PROGRAM: EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

SMADC funds purchased farm equipment to be shared and rented for farmers across the Southern Maryland region. Priority was placed on equipment that promoted long-term environmental benefit to the Chesapeake Bay and/or supported new farm initiatives, such as wine grape growing, and small scale, urban farming operations.

In 2014, five more pieces of equipment were purchased, for a total of 30 farm implements are now available for rent through partner entities.

### **Highlights (cumulative 2014):**

- 30 pieces of equipment have been purchased and are available for farmers to rent across the region.
- Over 2,500 acres positively impacted by conservation tillage across the five counties, an increase of 30% from FY'13 (1,900 acres).

## **EDUCATION: FARMERS**

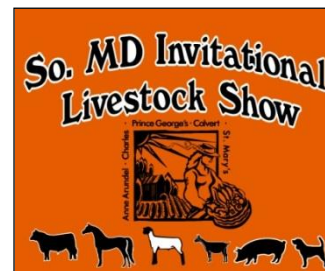
Educating the next generation of farmers, consumers, politicians and decision-makers is the key to the future of farming across the United States. In addition to its many outreach programs, SMADC employs a hand-on approach to foster the next generation of farmers. In an effort to help new and existing farmers continue to diversify and identify market-drive opportunities, SMADC hosted the following in 2014:

### **Workshops FY'14**

	<b>Attending</b>
How the Affordable Care Act Will Affect Your Farm or Small Business	5
LMCAT - Meats Workshop	19
Pricing for Profit - Meats Workshop	29
Poultry & Rabbit Certification Workshop	30
Social Media Workshop for Farms	13
Food Council Networking Event	48
Local Government Exchange (w/ Harry R. Hughes Agroecology Cen.)	<u>75</u>
	<b>219</b>

## **SMILE: EDUCATION AND NETWORKING FOR YOUTH**

As farms become fewer in number across the state of Maryland, it is increasingly important to find ways to provide educational and networking opportunities for farm and community youth. To address this need, SMADC has sponsored the Southern Maryland Invitational Livestock Expo (SMILE) show for 10 years, and helped establish the SMILE, LLC Board.



Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the SMILE Expo featured fitting and showing, market and breeding competitions for domestic livestock species and classes for small domestic species (rabbits and guinea pigs). A SMILE community dinner, educational demonstrations and youth development events were held to foster camaraderie, enhance participants' skills and raise appreciation for the area's agricultural heritage. The Rabbit and Cavy (guinea pig) showmanship classes continued to have popular appeal for children and youth who do not have the opportunity to raise large livestock.

**Highlights (FY'14):**

- 93 youth participated from seven counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, St. Mary's, and Talbot Counties). Two hundred and seventy seven animals registered for the events (38 Swine, 62 Sheep, 84 Meat Goats, 19 Dairy Goats, 11 Dairy Cows, 32 Beef and 31 Rabbits & Cavies).
- The show was well attended by local and elected officials, Farm Bureau representatives, County Commissioners and the St. Mary's County Fair Board, and the general public. Local newspapers and website media reported on the event.
- The SMILE board continues to actively seek sponsorship grants and donations from other organizations. Sponsorships garnered over \$8,000.

**SMADC Partners include (2014):**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>
Accokeek Foundation	Accokeek
Agricultural Marketing Professionals (Maryland)	AMPS
Agroecology Center	Agroecology
Anacostia Trails Heritage Area, Inc.	
Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation	AAEDC
Anne Arundel County Parks and Recreation Department	
Anne Arundel County Public Schools	
Anne Arundel Watermen's Association	AA Watermen
Beach Elementary School	
Bowie Baysox	
Calvert Churches Community Food Pantry	CCC Food Pantry
Calvert County Department of Economic Development	CA DED
Calvert County Department of Planning and Zoning	CA DPZ
Calvert County Fair Board	
Calvert County Public Schools	CCPS
Calvert County Soil Conservation District	CA SCD
Calvert County Sustainable Agriculture Workgroup	
Calvert County University of Maryland Extension	CC UME
Calvert County Watermen's Assoc.	CA Watermen
Calvert Sustainable Agriculture Working Group	
Canard Catering	
Catholic Charities	
Central Elementary School	
Charles County 4-H	
Charles County Board of Commissioners	CCBOC
Charles County Department of Community Service	
Charles County Department of Economic Development	CH DED
Charles County Department of Planning & Growth Management	CH PGM
Charles County Fair Board	
Charles County Farm Bureau	CC FB
Charles County Planning and Zoning	
Charles County Public Schools	
Charles County Social Services	CH SS
Charles County Soil Conservation District	CH SCD
Charles County Tourism	
Charles County Watermen's Association	CH Watermen

Chesapeake's Bounty	
Chesapeake Food Leadership Council	
Clover Hill Dairy	
Christ Church (Episcopal) Port Tobacco Parish	CC PTP
Circle of Angels	COA
College of Southern Maryland	CSM
Colonial Farm Credit	
Cornell University	
Department of Business Economic Development	DBED
Eat Fresh Maryland	
End Hunger in Calvert	EA CA
Even' Star Organic Farm	
Fairfield Farm	
Farming 4 Hunger	F4H
Food Leadership Council of Maryland & DC	
Future Harvest	
Harbor Designs Engineering	
Health Care Without Harm	
Home Grown Farm Market, LLC	
Jubilee Farm	
Leadership Maryland	LEAD
Letti Marshal Dent Elementary School	
Living Branches	LB
Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation	MARBIDCO
Maryland Agricultural Marketing Professionals	AMPs
Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund	MAERDAF
Maryland Beginning Farmer Success Project	
Maryland Comptroller's Office	
Maryland Department of Agriculture	MDA
Maryland Dept. of Ag's Agricultural Conflict Resolution Service	ACRes
Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development	DBED
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – Office of Food Protection	DHMH
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene – Center for Milk Control	DHMH
Maryland Farmers Market Association	MDFMA
Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment /Maryland Health Care without Harm	H2E
Maryland Senate	
Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation	
Maryland Horse Council	
Maryland Horse Industry Board	MHIB
Maryland State Highway Administration	SHA
Maryland Technology Development Corporation	TEDCO
Maryland Wineries Association	MWA
Miller Farm Market	

Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy Elementary School	
Morgan State University	
Nantucket Elementary School	
NAX Pax River Conference Center	
Oxon Hill Bicycle and Trail Club	
Pasadena Elementary School	
Patuxent Adventure Center	PAC
PAX Velo Cycling Club	
Port of Leonardtown Winery and Cooperative	
Prince George's County Farm Bureau	PG FB
Piney Point Elementary School	
Prince George's County University of Maryland Extension	PG UME
Prince George's County Farm Bureau	PG FB
Prince George's Soil Conservation District	PGSCD
Register of Wills (All five counties)	
Rowland's Engineering	
Rural Maryland Council	
Rural Health Disparities Network	
St. Charles Companies	
St. Leonard Elementary School	
St. Mary's Caring	SM Caring
St. Mary's College	SMC
St. Mary's County Fair Board	
St. Mary's County Government	
St. Mary's County Public Schools	SMCPS
St. Mary's County Tourism	
St. Mary's County University of Maryland Extension	SM UME
St. Mary's Economic Development Office – Agriculture and Seafood	SM EDC
St. Mary's Farm Bureau	SM FB
St. Mary's County Health Department	SM HD
St. Mary's Land Growth Use and Management	SM LGUM
St. Mary's Soil Conservation District	SM SCD
St. Mary's Watermen's Association	
St. Michael's Elementary School	
State Highway Administration	SHA
Sotterley Plantation Foundation	
Southern Maryland Association of Realtors	SMAR
Southern Maryland Blue Crabs	
Southern Maryland Bootscooters	
Southern Maryland Delegation	
Southern Maryland Food Bank	SM Food Bank
Southern Maryland Rural Health Disparities Network	SMRHDN
Southern Maryland Ministers Alliance	
Spider Hall Farm	
State Highway Administration	SHA
T&A Farm	
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	TCC



Town Creek Foundation	
Town of Leonardtown	
United States Department of Agriculture	USDA
United States Food and Drug Authority	FDA
University of Maryland Eastern Shore	
University of Maryland Extension	UME
Waldorf Farmers' Market	



SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL for SOUTHERN MARYLAND

### Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Strategy 2012—2020 (adopted 2011) Summary

SMADC's goals are as follows: 1) thriving, market-driven farms that have the resources they need to be profitable; 2) a Maryland where farmland preservation and environmental stewardship positively impact the quality of our air and water and protect one of our greatest assets, the Chesapeake Bay, and 3) a future where profitable farms play an integral role in the health and quality of life of our community.

Description: This program fosters agricultural development and assists farmers to transition from growing tobacco to alternative crops and natural resource-based enterprises. The Department of Agriculture works with the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland, through the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), to operate the program and disburse the funds. The Southern MD Agricultural Development Program has two capital components: the Tobacco Buyout component, under which eligible tobacco growers received funds for ten years to stop growing tobacco; and the Agricultural Land Preservation component, matching funds from local governments and/or the State's Agricultural Land Preservation Program for the purchase of land preservation easements and securing the necessary land base for regional agricultural development.

### Strategic Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Supporting Programs (2013-2014)

#### Goal 1: Thriving, market-driven farms that have the resources they need to be profitable

##### **Objective 1.1: Targeted, smart growth in the region's overall agricultural development**

- 1.1A: Identify and support key emerging opportunities most profitable to local farms*
- 1.1B: Develop regional brands (to market inside and outside the region)*
- 1.1C: Work with local and state leaders to capitalize on trends and challenges impacting agriculture*
- 1.1D: Address challenges posed by outdated Ag stereotypes*

##### **Objective 1.2: A strong regional identity as a tourism and cultural heritage destination**

- 1.2A: Expand the Southern Maryland Trails Earth, Art, Imagination*

##### **Objective 1.3: Increased (potential) profit per acre for existing farms (5% by 2015)**

- 1.3A: Help individual farms to diversify their product offerings*
- 1.3B: Help farms increase profit margin of products currently offered*

##### **Objective 1.4: Increased consumer market for the region's farm products (10% by 2020)**

- 1.4A: Increase the number of local consumers that buy from Southern Maryland farms*
- 1.4B: Explore ways to get fresh farm food to markets that do not traditionally purchase local foods*
- 1.4C: Explore ways to increase purchase of farm food by restaurants and stores*

**Objective 1.5: SMADC will generate revenue.**

*1.4A: Devise plan to generate revenue via advertising and membership fees*

**SMADC supporting programs:** Southern Maryland Meats and Targeted Industry Development, Southern Maryland Farmers' Markets, So. Maryland, So Good, Maryland Buy Local Challenge, Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination, Workshops and Education, Farm Share Equipment, Hub and Spoke Program, Southern Maryland Agri-Business Park, Streamlining Regulations, Southern Maryland Regional Grants (industry, education, equipment), SMADC outreach, Advertising and partner fees.

**MEASURING OUTCOMES FOR GOAL #1:** SMADC will track number of farms in the five-county regions expanding into key product areas over one, three and 10 year increments. Additionally, SMADC will track success of these new ventures as measured by increased profit per acre of farmland specifically used for these products. SMADC will track approximate profit per acre of a sampling of farms through a combination of methods, including gathering input from farm owners, and state and national statistics, and then extrapolating based on acres of land in farming in the region. SMADC will estimate numbers of consumers of farm products through a combination of methods, including tracking consumers' use of SMADC websites, and tracking of sales at farmers' markets.

**Goal 2: A Maryland where farmland preservation and environmental stewardship positively impact the quality of our air and water and protect one of our greatest assets, the Chesapeake Bay**

**Objective 2.1: 30,000 additional acres in land preservation by 2020, pending availability of funds**

*2.1A: Promote incentives for landowners to put land under state and/or local preservation programs*

*2.1B: Explore innovative land preservation initiatives (land trusts, private partners)*

**Objective 2.2: Increased environmental stewardship among farms (more farmers using better practices)**

*2.2A: Develop and offer incentives for environmental stewardship practices*

*2.2B: Strengthen public awareness of the roles farms play in a healthier environment*

**SMADC supporting programs:** Agricultural Land Preservation, Farm Share Equipment, Maryland FARMLINK, Maryland Buy Local Challenge

**MEASURING OUTCOMES FOR GOAL #2:** SMADC will track number of acres in farmland and under land preservation over one, three and 10-year increments. (There is a challenge in calculating preserved acres in that some counties record preserved land differently.) SMADC will track number of farms actively improving environmental stewardship by tracking of use of equipment and how many more acres are under soil conservation each year with its partners.

**Goal 3: A future where profitable farms play an integral role in the health and quality of life of our community (Farms, Foods, Communities)**

**Objective 3.1: Increased access by underserved markets to fresh and healthy foods by 2015**

*3.1A: Explore ways to get fresh farm food to impoverished and underserved community via a means that is profitable to farmers yet affordable to these consumers*

**Objective 3.2: Improved childhood health (reduction of childhood hunger and obesity) and overall community health through enhanced role of farms in nutrition and exercise**

*3.2A: Improve nutritional quality of children's diets by exposing them to the benefits of farm foods*

*3.2B: Improve nutritional quality of children's diets by making farm foods more desirable*

*3.2C: Stress importance of exercise and outdoor activity with emphasis on agritourism*

**Objective 3.3: New farmers recruited to counteract loss of farmland**

*3.3A: Recruit farmers relocating from other areas, new and second-career farmers*

- 3.3B: Create exit strategy for those farms that have not successfully transitioned at end of Buyout phase*
- 3.3C: Provide incentives for farm children to network and remain in farming*
- 3.3D: Educate children/youth on advantages of career in farming*

**Objective 3.4: 10% more active, efficient partnerships that support region's farms by 2015**

- 3.4A: Explore possible new partnerships that can assist SMADC in reaching goals*
- 3.4B: Explore ways to increase effectiveness of current partnerships*
- 3.4C: Expand/support Southern Maryland Trails program to build productive partnerships*

**Objective 3.5: Strengthened public awareness of the value of farms to the local economy, future food security**

- 3.5A: Expand Buy Local Challenge*
- 3.5B: Expand partnerships between farms and economic development sector*

**SMADC supporting programs:** Hub and Spoke Program, Southern Maryland Farmers' Markets, Southern Maryland Food Maps, Crop Hop, Southern Maryland Food Council, Southern Maryland Agri-Business Park, Cornelia and the Farm Band, Maryland Buy Local Challenge, Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination, Maryland FarmLINK: Property Exchange, Mentor Match, START (new and transitioning farmers' network), Farm Share Equipment, SMILE, Regional Grants, SMADC community outreach.

**MEASURING OUTCOMES FOR GOAL #3:** SMADC will track number schools (children) receiving exposure to the benefits of farm food through Farm to School programs and other venues. SMADC will also estimate the number of underserved that receive fresh, local farm foods. SMADC will estimate number of new farms in the region.

For more information regarding this program, please contact:

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**SOUTHERN MARYLAND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Southern Maryland Regional Agricultural Strategy 2012—2020**

**MEASURING FOR RESULTS FY'14 AND FY'15**

**GOAL 1: THRIVING, MARKET-DRIVEN FARMS THAT HAVE THE RESOURCES TO BE PROFITABLE**

Resources for Profitability

*Measurement forecasted in FY'12: 5 % increase in profitability for existing farms by 2015.*

Note: So. Maryland, So Good and Maryland Buy Local Challenge programs: Data from the latest USDA national agricultural census data show that from 2007 to 2012, the value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption grew 58% in Southern Maryland. Direct sales grew by \$1.6 million in Southern Maryland, with growth in all five counties. However, as of 2012, total Southern Maryland sales were 3.6% of total Maryland agriculture sales. Southern Maryland still has some catching up to do with the rest of the state to fully recover from the effort to end its tobacco-based economy.

Note: Southern Maryland Trails: Earth, Art, Imagination: Between 2007 and 2012, data from the latest USDA National agricultural census data show that agritourism sales grew 142% in Southern Maryland. Total agri-tourism sales grew by \$586,000 over the period for the four counties (Calvert data not included).

Agritourism signs:

- SMADC's initiative also helped create the Maryland state highway sign program for agri-tourism farms in FY'14. The first two farms with approved signs are in Charles County, with a third pending in Frederick County.

Southern Maryland Meats:

- 40 producers participate in SMM (7 new in FY'14).
- Over 58,000 pounds of product transported in FY'14 with an estimated retail value of \$306,820 (a 21% increase in retail sales from 2013).
- 8 retail venues host SMM display cases, at least one case in each of the 5 counties.
- 74% increase in total sales at retail host venues from FY'13 ( \$165,713).

Dairy: SMADC assisted Southern Maryland's first Amish Dairy get established in 2014.

- 16 dairy farms benefit and more than 20 estimated for full production.
- \$54,000 estimated product retail value in first 3 month of production (April – June 2014).
- \$48,000 per month with first bulk contract for 4,000lbs per week in June 2014.

Wine:

- 68 acres now in wine grape production, which will earn an estimated \$206,400 (a 42% increase from 18 new acres that were planted in 2014 using SMADC grant funds.)
- 14 farms now growing wine grapes.
- 12 wineries.

SMADC website:

- 131,000 visits, 51,000 unique visits (doubled in FY'14).

Maryland Buy Local Challenge

- \$53,500 was spent on local farm foods by BLC-participating Mid-Atlantic hospitals.
- 56 hospitals/health care facilities participated in the 2013 BLC.

## **GOAL 2: FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

### Increased acres under farmland preservation

*Measurement forecasted in FY'12: 247 farms preserved, which will result in preserving an estimated cumulative total of 28,200 acres, by 2015, assuming funds are made available.*

### Agricultural Land Preservation:

- Three farms containing 182 acres have been directly preserved by the program in four counties of Southern Maryland in FY'14, resulting in 14,980 acres cumulative over the 12 years of program funding (just SMADC program funds).\*
- 270 farms containing 31,635 acres have been cumulatively preserved in Southern Maryland (SMADC and leveraged funds by the counties).
- The FY'15 goal has been revised to increase the total number of preserved acres to an estimated 33,000 acres.

### Farm Share Equipment:

- 30 pieces of equipment have been purchased and are available for farmers to rent across the region.
- Over 2,500 acres positively impacted by conservation tillage across the five counties, an increase of 30% from FY'13 (1,900 acres).

## **GOAL 3: A FUTURE WHERE PROFITABLE FARMS PLAY AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY (FARMS, FOODS, COMMUNITIES)**

### Increased access to farm foods.

*Measurement: Eight farmers' markets participating with EBT by 2015, and a total of 80 transactions per week by 2015, assuming that the Farm Bill still supports SNAP.*

### Farmers' Markets:

- 12 markets in Southern Maryland now accept EBT. Of those markets, 8 received marketing assistance from SMADC.
- SMADC cannot accurately measure transactions by week. A more accurate measurement would be the total SNAP/EBT sales amount for the fiscal year. Recommendation for new goal: Nine farmers' markets participating with EBT by 2015 and \$5,000 of EBT sales.

Enhanced awareness of the beneficial role farms provide in childhood obesity, nutrition, overall community health, and the environment.

*Measurement: 20% more children exposed to the benefits of local farm foods. (3000 more school children exposed to the benefits of local farm foods in FY'14 and again in FY'15.)*

### Cornelia and the Farm Band:

- Approximately 10,400 new children were reached at the special events and schools, well over 20% since FY'13.
- Over 20,500 children have been reached through special events since 2011.
- Over 16,000 school children have been reached at schools since 2009.

### Crop Hop:

- 249 riders participated in the 2013 Crop Hop, receiving educational tours on six farms, a 25% increase in ridership (up from 185 in our first year 2013).

### SMILE:

- 93 youth from seven counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, St. Mary's, and Talbot Counties)



### Increase the number of new farmer enterprises

*Measurement forecasted in FY'12: 20 new farmer enterprises by 2015.*

#### Maryland FarmLINK

- 72 properties posted
- 60 new posts
- 595 new members (82% increase from 2013)
- 126 new beginning farmer members
- 175 new farmer members
- 6 mentor matches
- 50 START farmers meeting regularly
- Nationwide interest in the model program: *California FarmLink* and *Land for Good* (the New England landlink website) have asked for assistance in setting up a realtor training program, similar to our program)

### **CROSS-CUTTING**

*Measurement: Hub and Spoke model developed for Southern Maryland that facilitates distribution of fresh farm food to the hunger community and enhances the economic sustainability of local farms by FY'15 with partners.*

The Hub and Spoke report was issued in December 2013 and is available at [http://www.smadc.com/food\\_farms\\_nutr/hubspoke.html](http://www.smadc.com/food_farms_nutr/hubspoke.html).

While this program is just getting started, and will more apply to FY'15, the following highlights are reported within July-August 2014:

- 11 farms participating in growing and aggregating produce for F4H (10 new in FY'14-15).
- Participating farmers saw a doubling of economic benefit (50% increase in income).
- Increased distributions of fresh food to 37 locations, in all five Southern Maryland counties between (up from 10-15 in FY'13). This is a 33-40% increase in just the first two months.
- Faster turnaround time of fresh farm produce, from field to the hands of the needy in 24-48 hours.
- Reduced mileage and trucking costs of shipped produce.
- Fresher, higher quality of food distributed
- Increased direct farmer to food pantry relationships (Spokes), increasing fresh produce to the hunger community